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New Statesman
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Home truths from Lambeth Palace

THE OLD saw had it that the Church of England was the Tory Party at prayer. The interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury, published in *The Times* on Monday, makes it quite clear that today's Church of England is certainly not Mrs Thatcher's Tory Party at prayer.

Dr Runcie is not likely ever to vote Labour (though he broke with precedent for Archbishops of Canterbury at the last general election by voting at all). But he has made it clear that as a Christian he is now intolerably distressed by the total lack of compassion and by the positive relish for social confrontation that are the hallmarks of Thatcherism.

The Tory Party that Dr Runcie doesn't like has been on full display in Brighton this week. We go to press without the benefit of having heard the leader's annual rallying cry for patriotic Poujadism. But the tone of the week was set from the start by the Home Secretary Leon Brittan. It was one of the ugliest little bouts of Tory conference appeasement that we have seen in years.

Mr Brittan is not a fool and he knows that there are serious problems of police efficiency and accountability that sooner or later a Home Secretary is going to have to tackle. But Mr Brittan is an ambitious politician, who has been in trouble before with the social Darwinists who are now in the overwhelming majority at Tory conferences. So he gave them what they wanted — open ended central government financing for policing in the miners' dispute (for Scargill must be defeated 'at any cost'); chief constables to be protected from their political masters; more magistrates to be drafted in to catch up on the backlog.

In his rejection of the idea that policing ought to be set in a context of local consent and accountability, Mr Brittan contrived to appear even more extreme than the chairman of the Police Federation. At least Mr Leslie Curtis's organisation hurriedly dissociated itself from his assertion last week that the police would find it difficult to cooperate with a future Labour government. Mr Brittan's message was that the police need not cooperate with anyone, since their responsibility is for law and order and their accountability is only to themselves.

ARCHBISHOP Runcie would not claim to be an economist. But in the now celebrated interview he did ask the $64 question. '. . . if the human consequences of [government policy] mean unemployment on an unprecedented scale, poverty, bureaucracy, despair about the future of some communities, inequitable sharing of the sacrifice called for, then the objectives must be called in question . . . How long can we wait for jam tomorrow?'

Under the policies of this government we shall wait for ever for jam tomorrow, because they are economically bankrupt, as they have been from the start. Mrs Thatcher's notions about economics have always been infantile. Historians will look back on this period since 1979 in complete disbelief that they were allowed to grip policy so completely and that the majority of economists, Treasury officials, bankers were unable or unwilling effectively to tell her and the public the truth.

Mr John Biffen once tried, though even he only predicted the half of it. In 1980, then a Treasury minister, he was bold enough to say that the country faced three years of unparalleled austerity.

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He was slapped down at once. 'I don't think there'll be three years of unparalleled austerity. There will be three years of realism and three years, four years, five years, I hope ten years, of opportunity' — thus she disposed of Biffen on BBC *Panorama*.

Her three years of 'realism' were up in February 1983. Since then unemployment has continued to rise steadily, the value of the pound has continued to fall steadily, apart from North Sea oil our balance of payments gets worse steadily, there is no underlying improvement in the relative productivity of the British economy, the pathetic economic recovery is already beginning to peter out and capital investment for the future is flat.

It was all predictable. Economic policy from 1979 was based on a laughable proposition. It was that, if the supply of money in the economy was made to grow more slowly, the rate of inflation would fall correspondingly with a time-lag of between 18 months and two years without any damaging effect on output and the real economy. It was laughable, but it has taken five years and 4,000,000 unemployed to discredit it in practice.

Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer is putting forward an equally laughable thesis and the new Minister without Portfolio, David Young, is heading a unit to put it to the test. It is that inefficiencies on the 'supply' side of the economic equation are the reason why unemployment keeps on stubbornly rising. The experience of the United States, where under President Reagan six to seven million new jobs have been created, is called as evidence.

This is palpable nonsense. The US economy has been in prolonged boom because, for all the covering rhetoric, American economic policy has been a textbook example of Keynesian demand-led growth. If Lawson and Young are allowed to establish the idea that any serious impact can be made on the overall problem by tinkering with job training, education and the tax system we shall be condemned to another five years of predictable economic doom. □

Customs we could do without

A MOTION to debate gay rights failed to get onto Labour's conference agenda in Blackpool last week, though there was a well-attended fringe meeting, addressed among others by Gerald Kaufman, as shadow Home Secretary. This week we saw part of the reason why a debate was urged. On Monday, Customs & Excise served 16 seizure notices, covering 132 titles and 2,265 volumes in all, on Gay's the Word community bookshop in London's Bloomsbury.

It is the third seizure notice this year since the shop itself, and homes of directors, were raided by Customs in the so-called *Operation Tiger* of 10 April. It has already been widely noticed that Customs officers at ports of entry are stopping as (in their view) 'indecent or obscene' books which are being, or have in the past been, published and sold with impunity by publishing firms in the UK. The latest seizures include *Iolaus: An Anthology of Friendship* by the Socialist pioneer and open homosexual Edward Carpenter.

The print-out of titles which Customs seeks to destroy, and which Gay's the Word had been seeking to import, is nearly a yard of close-packed type long. Gore Vidal (*A Thirsty Evil*) is on it. Djuna Barnes (*Ryder*, published in the 1930s). Jean Paul Sartre (*Saint Genet*). Jim Kirkwood (*There Must be a Pony!*, teenagers' book published by Jonathan Cape in 1961). And an 1880s novel, *Teleny*, attributed to Oscar Wilde — a particularly grotesque irony, this, in a month which has seen Home Secretary Leon Brittan personally authorise the release to the public domain, 13 years ahead of time, of the pathetic appeals for leniency which Wilde addressed to the Home Office in 1895-97.

This is not the place to rehearse the complex laws under which Customs is carrying out these operations, or the multiple jeopardy, both personal and financial, into which the harassed bookshop and staff are being driven. But it is the place to ask who is encouraging this policy.

The relatively junior Treasury Minister of State, Barney Hayhoe, this month declared himself 'the minister with overall responsibility in these matters'. But the Customs, like the police, tend to move in intuitive response to the political climate in those ample grey areas, such as allegations of 'indecency', where there is neither a First Amendment nor a Bill of Rights establishing a *presumption* of the citizens' right to read what they please.

As an Opposition spokesperson for the Treasury 17 years ago Mrs Thatcher avoided the divisions (the votes) on the Labour government's partial decriminalisation of gay men in the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. By May 1982, though, in her statement to Parliament in the wake of the Diplock report on security arrangements, set up in the aftermath of alleged heterosexual irregularities by ex-MI6 Director Sir Roger Hollis, she was forbidding the employment of homosexuals by the Diplomatic Service in Britain's representation overseas.

This explicit discrimination out of the Prime Minister's office has found its echo in the Home Office this year (as well as in the Customs). David Waddington, Home Office Minister of State, declared in a letter to a constituent this spring that it would be 'crankish' to think it 'wrong to discriminate against people on grounds of homosexuality'. Great play has been made in Tory conference this week with the historical facts that Mussolini once called himself a 'Socialist journalist', and that Nazism called itself 'National Socialism', as part of the propaganda against the Labour movement. But look to reality: another of the titles seized by Thatcher's Customs this week was *The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals*. A history book. □

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FOCUSES ON THE PLIGHT OF THE WOMEN

WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS are to be made the focus of a specific major campaign by the human rights organisation, Amnesty International, who will be naming names as usual. CHERRILL HICKS reports

TO BE LAUNCHED next week, the worldwide campaign will turn attention to thousands of women detained for their political, religious, or trade union activities — and will highlight cases of women activitists who have been tortured, murdered or abducted by agencies of government.

It will be stressed that not only are women made political prisoners for all the reasons applied to men, but are also liable to be held as a means of trapping or pressurising male relatives. And often face the added threats of rape and sexual abuse.

Hilda Narcisco (left), for instance, a Roman Catholic lay community worker in the Philippines, was raped and sexually molested after arrest without warrant by military personnel in March last year, say Amnesty. Charges of subversion made against her were later dropped. But her efforts to bring a counter-charge of rape have foundered on the military establishment's refusal to investigate.

Cases to be highlighted include:

● **Alaide Foppa** (centre), a Guatemalan exile living in Mexico who has been missing since 1980 when she was abducted, apparently by plainclothes security agencies, while on a visit home. A prominent art critic and poet and an active feminist, she was a former presenter of a women's radio programme which had been critical of the government.

● **Florence Mkhize** (right), a South African activist who has been repeatedly detained without trial or restricted under banning orders for over 20 years. Formerly a leading member of the Federation of South African Women and an organiser of the now banned African National Congress, she is currently under partial house arrest in Durban.

● **Sylvia Goethe**, a 29 year old East German peace activist and would-be emigrant, sentenced last April to 20 months imprisonment for 'taking up illegal contacts' under the GDR's penal code. She has made several suicide attempts.

● **Fatima al-Lazkani**, a Syrian medical student and women's rights activist, being held without charge or trial in a Damascus prison. She was arrested three years ago while leafletting for the banned Party for Communist Action.

● **Reinalda Pereira Plaza**, a Chilean medical laboratory technologist and trade union leader, who was violently abducted by two armed men in December 1976 when she was five months pregnant. She was one of 13 Communist Party members who 'disappeared' at the same time. ●

Belgrano

Thatcher fog rolls thicker than ever. . .

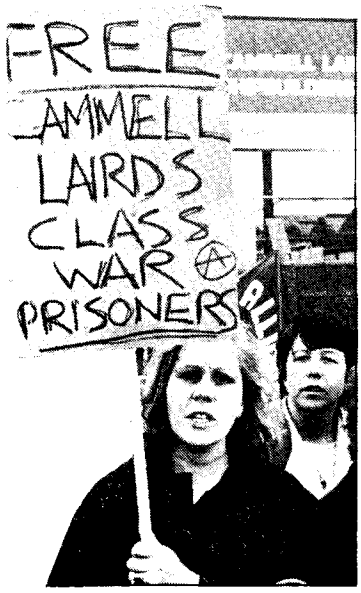
MONDAY's letter (8 October) from Mrs Thatcher to SDP leader David Owen states on behalf of the government 'we do not have a continuous record of the course which the Belgrano *followed, but certainly she made many changes of course during 2 May which is all we have ever claimed'.*

But, as the New Statesman *has already revealed, the* Belgrano *made just two changes — one 11 hours before it was attacked, involving a complete about-turn putting it on course for the Argentine mainland; the other a minor adjustment of 10 degrees made a few hours later.*

Mrs Thatcher claims that ministers weren't told about the Belgrano's *course-reversal on 2 May 1982 until November 1982, six months after the war. This view was immediately contradicted by Lord Lewin, former chief of Defense Staff, on Tuesday's* World at One, *who said he thought it 'highly likely' ministers had been informed verbally of the ship's change of course long before the end of the war, let alone by November.*

Moreover, within a week of the actual attack both the Financial Times *and the* Sunday Times *had reported the* Belgrano's *captain (one of the survivors) as saying the cruiser was heading for home when sunk at 8pm on that 2 May.*

Roger Price



John Smith/IFL

Cammell 'stagers' keep up fight in Walton nick

WALTON PRISON in Liverpool is likely to go on being 'home' for the next three weeks to the 37 Cammell Laird shipyard workers who are refusing to apologise for their 14-week occupation of the last two vessels being built in Birkenhead yard.

Their case was taken up this week by the Official Solicitor without their request — who failed to repeat his 1972 success, when he freed against their will five dockers who were jailed for contempt in the period of Heath's Industrial Relations Act.

The 37 are mainly 'stagers', who build the ships' scaffolding, by tradition a militant group within the boilermakers' union. The Cammell Laird workforce has almost halved in the last year, and now faces — after voluntary redundancies — 600 compulsory redundancies.

Barry Williams, a district officer from the boilermakers' section of the General, Municipal & Boilermakers Union, says that the first group named by management for forced redundancy included 10 shop stewards out of the total of 28.

The message from Walton jail remains defiant — the 'stagers' have no intention if they can help it of shortening their 28-day sentence (for defying a judge's order to end their sit-in) if the price is expressing regret for their actions.

The suspicion in Birkenhead is that Cammell Laird want work on the two vessels finished so they can then shut down the yard entirely, but management deny it. Yard managing director Michael Murden says if the scale of redundancies demanded can be achieved it'll help restore the yard's competitiveness.

Meanwhile the jailed men are threatened with the loss of redundancy money (should it come to that in the end) for the company is sacking them for 'gross misconduct'. The loss for some individuals could be upwards of £10,000.

Geraldine Hackett

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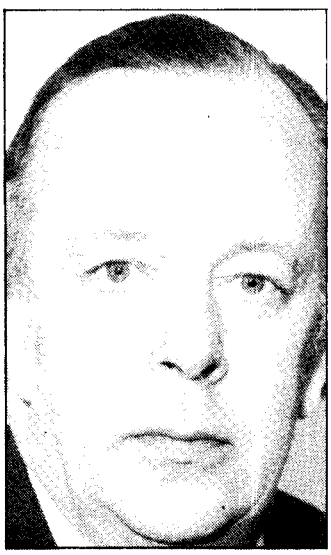
Tories rattle the sabres over industrial tribunals

THE EXTENT of the government's strategy to dismantle workplace conciliation mechanisms — and accordingly undermine job security — is emerging from a critical new appointment and from instructions just given by Employment Secretary Tom King.

The controversial appointment is that of Southwark Crown Court judge David West-Russell as the country's new President of Industrial Tribunals — ie top labour court judge. It's been met with bitter resentment by full-time tribunal chairpersons because of the unusual break with tradition involved.



UPP

No 'buggin' he — West-Russell

By custom, the senior regional chairperson is usually appointed president; and, although most of the younger chairmen and women thought Tom King right to do away with the outdated system of 'buggin's turn', they are angry that he has brought in a criminal judge, with little or no labour law experience, in preference to the many able and willing people anxious to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Sir Jack Rumbold.

The man tipped for the job, the brilliant and experienced Eric Wrintmore, chairman of the London Central tribunal, is believed to have been overlooked because the government plans to turns its attention to the increasing number of sacked workers who feel aggrieved at their dismissals.

It's suspected too that a number of drastic changes are in the pipeline. Department of Employment staff are privately saying that West-Russell was brought in by Master of the Rolls Lord Donaldson, the Lord Chancellor and Mrs Thatcher, because he's seen as the person most able to see them through.

If the rumoured changes prove true, industrial tribunals as informal 'people's courts' will become a thing of the past. Instead, as became policy in the 1984 Trade Union Act, most industrial tribunal cases will be transferred to County Courts.

The present 'vetting' system, which is meant to weed out 'frivolous' cases, would become more crucial in the sifting of applications. For example, cases involving contentious legal points would be forced to get an Employment Appeals' Tribunal decision before they were heard by local tribunals.

Other Tory reforms being considered include: more written details before cases are heard, to cut time and costs; senior solicitors and barristers to appear at tribunals; and trade union representatives to take a more active part in representing their members (or former members).

And, as a carrot, greater onus of proof on the employer in cases where the sacked employee has been employed for more than 20 years.

Cut the case-load

The second development, and one on which Tom King's private office is refusing to comment, is a request to the senior administrator of tribunals, Mrs Eve Craske, to give a full report on the likely effects of three model changes.

Mrs Craske has been asked to detail the effects on the functioning of tribunals if applications were restricted to people employed for: between five to 10 years; between 10 to 20 years; and, over 20 years. If the government raised the time limit from 12 months (as at present) to five years, as is widely expected, it might well cut the number of applications to tribunals by 80 per cent. It's believed this is the figure that Tom King is seriously considering.

Already David West-Russell, for his part, is showing his must deletion (lawyer) colours. On Monday, 1 October, his first day of work, he arrived at his South London office by chauffeur-driven car at 7.30am. By 10 o'clock, he had issued a comprehensive confidential circular to heads of departments on disclosure of information and future co-operation with the press and public.

He has blocked public access to the sub-register; fewer details will be given in the Record of Applications and members of the press and public are barred from the Record; no information will be given prior to hearing, including full addresses; full names of tribunal members will be given only with their consent; and, most significantly, only cases open to the public will be listed on the weekly 'Cause' list.

Some full-time chairpersons are concerned that this attempt to work out the parameters of Tory 'secret' justice will seriously affect the tribunals' reputation for impartiality and informality.

Hal Austin

MISCELLANY

Queue to abuse Ridley

Lothian Region's director of public transport, Charles Evans, is very upset about the government's White Paper on Britain's bus services. So upset that, at the last meeting of his transportation committee, he circulated a picture of how he thought the British bus-stop might look if the Tories' scheme for 'back-door privatisation' is implemented. The stop-signs enticingly advertise such services as 'Fast Buck Bus Co — Here today, gone tomorrow', 'Cream-Off Bus Co', and 'Fly-By-Night Coaches'. Even the council's ruling Tory Group seem to have appreciated the joke — they've agreed to submit some fierce criticisms of the goverment's plans. Unhappy man, is Ridley. The Transport Secretary told a Nottingham conference last week that under this autumn's Transport Bill taxis will be allowed to compete directly with buses. It was murmured to him that bus drivers, unlike cab drivers, are only allowed to work for so many hours. 'That's the first time I've heard that points made', said he.

Reading the runes

Plodding over the mound of Blackpool beneath which Labour Conference '84 is now forever buried, our political archaeologists are still picking up the occasional shard. Here's one with . . . what's that name? . . . ah, yes (dusting it off) Robin Cook. The cuneiform fragment, interpreted, reads: Record of Votes Cast in Elections for the National Executive Committee. It shows that of all the MPs who were candidates for the NEC only Cook (Livingston) didn't get his own constituency's vote. Even Kaufman, so widely thought to be in danger of deselection, got his own Manchester Gorton's vote. As to what it all means — the British Museum will let us all know, no doubt, in about 1987-88.

Ana Gram writes:

They haven't filled that Poet Laureate vacancy yet, have they? We pass NO comment on the soundness or otherwise of the political assessment which follows, but here's a name Neil might like to place before HM the second Downing St is his. Mr Davy Jones, obviously good at Victoria parlour-games, sends:

No left turn! Keep right with me
I knock Lenin down, you see.
'I knock Lenin' turn around and
'Neil Kinnock' will be found.

Next week: Roy Hattersley.

Armageddon's horrid

Keen-eyed peace doves watching Taylor Woodrow's building works, going on under license from MoD at the NATO primary static war HQ Nathill, near High Wycombe, are gleeful. The above-ground work is done, and the builders' labours are now underground, in the bunker. Electricians and mechanical fitters brought in by TW have demanded extra money or they'll down tools. For why? Because they're suffering claustrophobia, there not being enough exits. 'Mind you', say the doves, 'this one's not meant to be a bunker for *people*. It's for starting the war off'.

Another *NS* comp

A reader rings to say that on the day the news of the sinking of the Belgrano *came through the first BBC bulletin stated that the cruiser was sailing* away *from the Falklands. Horrified, she waited anxiously for the next bulletin, but says that was confused, giving no clear indication of the ship's destination. Answers from the BBC please, in a plain envelope, as to whether she could have heard alright in those first hours.*

War injuries

The latest issue of the *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps* (Vol 130) shows that of the 20 soldiers who lost a lower limb in the Falklands campaign 10 have subsequently been discharged from the army. None, it will be remembered, was invited to the Victory Parade in the City. 'Predictably', says Major A F G Groom, the 10 discharged 'have been the younger, more junior soldiers, who have least to offer in technical or managerial roles'. Rehabilitation of the group has apparently proved particularly difficult. The report believes that they are at a 'psychological disadvantage', having been injured in circumstances they 'could not regard as worthwhile' — for half the injuries requiring amputation were sustained after the ending of hostilities, from anti-personnel mines. The latest report confirms that the total British casualty list was 255 killed and 777 wounded.

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Uproar in ILEA school about who's unChristian

A BLISTERING row has broken out in a Church of England school over alleged political victimisation of a teacher. This Friday (15 October) the NUT (National Union of Teachers) will be discussing a request from members in the school to authorise industrial action.

Geraldine O'Mahoney has taught English at Blackheath Bluecoat comprehensive in London for over a year, with no criticism of her work. She's on temporary contract, with no job security. Two weeks ago the school advertised in the education press for a full-time permanent English teacher — and Ms O'Mahoney was told she needn't bother to apply.

The word came, it is claimed, from the headmistress, Miss Sheila Houlistone, and appears to be the upshot of an attempt by Ms O'Mahoney to push for the anti-racist statement that ILEA (the Inner London Education Authority) has been asking for from all its comprehensives.

The complexities need a little explaining. Blackheath Bluecoat is a Church of England voluntary aided school within ILEA, which pays 85 per cent of its capital costs and all salaries — but has no control whatsoever over it. (There are some 136 CofE secondary schools throughout the country).

Last year ILEA asked the heads of all its comprehensive schools to prepare anti-racist statements. At Blackheath Bluecoat Miss Houlistone, we understand, appointed a committee of teachers to advise her on the statement, but insisted on a right of veto. This was unacceptable to teachers and the committee was disbanded.

Christian objectives

Left to herself the headmistress then drew up a statement which emphasised the Christian ethos of the school, and apparently let it be known that in her view racism isn't a problem in Christian schools. Ms O'Mahoney led staffroom opposition to this text, arguing that it was superficial.

The situation now escalated. Miss Houlistone informed the school NUT representative, Roger West, that any teacher objecting to her statement must be in disagreement with the school's Christian objectives, and shouldn't be on the staff. The headmistress can't dismiss teachers on permanent contracts, but aparently made clear to the NUT rep and to Ms O'Mahoney that she would ensure that in future only practising members of the Church were employed.

West contacted senior officials at the NUT and at ILEA but both said that their hands were tied. Miss Houlistone, given the approval of her CofE appointed governors, can do as she wishes. ILEA, though prepared to find Ms O'Mahoney another job, said this week in the person of one official that the affair has 'nothing to do with racism', Ms O'Mahoney not being black.

On the other hand, when Ms O'Mahoney raised the matter with Mollie Hattersley, ILEA officer responsible to staff, she was told to contact the multi-ethnic education inspector, Mike Hussey. As of this moment, neither Hattersley nor Hussey will add anything to ILEA's official statement that the affair has nothing to do with racism — while Miss Houlistone refuses to speak to the *NS*, and referred us to ILEA.

The 28 strong NUT branch at Blackheath Blurcoat now wants the union's action committee to allow it to picket the interviews for what was Ms O'Mahoney's job. They know the law isn't behind them — but find it ironic that as yet neither the NUT nor ILEA has felt able to defend a teacher carrying out anti-racist policies officially approved by both organisations.

Barry Hugill

'Bloody lies' of CEGB

ALLEGATIONS that Parliament has been seriously misled about the military uses of civil plutonium are likely to be raised by MPs when Parliament returns later this month (see *NS* 13 July 1984).

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) revealed details this week of a tape-recorded interview with Lord Hinton, the highly-respected former chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) who died last year, in which he describes the CEGB's claim that none of its plutonium has been used for nuclear weapons as 'bloody lies'.

The CEGB's response has been to pass the buck to the government by saying that it's relying on ministerial assurances, and has no direct knowledge of the matter itself.

Hinton's blunt remarks, which were published as part of CND's evidence to the Sizewell B Public Inquiry, of course apply equally to the Government — which has persistently denied that any civil plutonium has been used in weapons.

Rob Edwards

Rob Edwards is co-ordinator of the CND Sizewell Working Group

Anti-secrecy campaigners face up to life in '85

THE CLIMATE for a change in secrecy laws under this government is now regarded as so bad that the Campaign for Freedom of Information (CFI) has dropped its aim of getting a full freedom of information act for the time being, and is pinning its hopes to a series of smaller changes giving fresh but more limited access to official information.

Dropping the '1984' which was originally part of its title — now that 1985 looms, with every prospect of being no less 'Orwellian' — the CFI has prepared four bills, on access to personal files, local authority and water authority secrecy, and information on pollution. The hope is that one'll be sponsored by one of the lucky MPs coming high up in the Private Members Bills ballot after the Commons resumes on 22 October.

The biggest obstacle to getting a full freedom of information bill passed is the personal opposition of the Prime Minister, in the view of CFI chair Des Wilson. Many Conservative MPs support the idea, and he points out that indeed it was Conservative administrations in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand which freed citizens' access to official records in those countries.

Martin Brown

Another YTS youth dies

THE DEATH-TOLL on the Youth Training Scheme continues to rise (see NS *17 August and 27 July). Lee Hayward, a 16 year-old trainee from Bedminster, died in Bristol on Monday 24 September, when the dumper truck he was driving on a landscaping site overturned and fell 13 feet into a trench, trapping him underneath. Another trainee, John Tovey, of Frampton Cotterell, was injured.*

The youngsters were working on an Avon County Council scheme under the Avon youth training agency, on land at Eastwood Farm, Brislington, owned by Bristol City Council. An inquest is being held this Friday. Four separate investigations have been launched, by police, the MSC, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and Avon County Council — and Bristol South Labour MP Michael Cocks has also called for a full and public investigation.

Lee Hayward is the seventh youth trainee to die since 1979 while operating an industrial vehicle, and the second to die while operating a dumper. His death comes just one year after a HSE campaign on the risks of running dumpers. Local MSC spokesman Peter Breen tells the NS *that there were sufficient supervisors on the site, 'but whether Lee Hayward was being properly supervised cannot be commented on before the inquest.'*

Quentin McDermott

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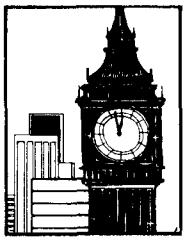

PETER KELLNER

Once upon a time, when we never had it so good

ON THE WHOLE, the media make too much of anniversaries. Consider how much ludicrous razzamatazz, for example, was expended four months ago marking the fortieth anniversary of D-Day. Even so, some anniversaries are worth a glancing notice; and this week one has occurred that in the circumstances — Conservatives meeting in Brighton to pay homage to the Prime Minister — you might have thought the press and TV would make more of. But the day passed without, as far as I could see, any public mention whatever.

Monday marked, or should have marked, the silver jubilee of post-war Conservatism's greatest triumph: Harold Macmillan's 1959 election victory. On 8 October that year the Conservatives won a 100-seat Commons majority with 49.4 per cent of the United Kingdom vote. Despite the fact that there were then seven million fewer electors than there are now, the Tories won 700,000 more votes 25 years ago than they managed in their 'landslide' win last year.

The absence of bunting in the streets, two-hour television documentaries and firework displays in Hyde Park is, on the face of it, remarkable. Or, rather, it would be remarkable if the Conservative Party that existed then still existed today. That, of course, is the point: the reason why the anniversary passed unmarked is that Mr Macmillan's party has ceased to exist. (No special disrespect to the House of Lords is intended, but somehow 'the Earl of Stockton' drains the occasion of all meaning.) For a Tory to proclaim today the politics that the party espoused in 1959 would be regarded, at best, as an ineptly coded attack on Mrs Thatcher and, at worst, as an act of political treason. It is as if today's Tories have been brainwashed by some fanatic religious cult leader into collective amnesia. They have forgotten 1959; for all practical purposes it never happened.

Let us remind them. 1959 was the year when we never had it so good. Prices were stable. Unemployment was below 500,000. (One of the Tory election posters read: 'It's full employment: keep it so! Vote Conservative'.) The bank rate was 4 per cent. The pound could buy 12 German marks and 2.8 American dollars. Mr Macmillan wrote proudly in the introduction to the Conservative manifesto that 'I do not remember any period in my lifetime when the economy has been so soundly based *and the prosperity of or people at home so widely spread*' (emphasis added). And to make sure the point was not lost, the manifesto affirmed that 'Conservative policy is to double the British standard of living in this generation and ensure that all sections of society share in the expansion of wealth'.

Public spending was seen, in those balmy far-off days, as an integral part of the process of both making Britain generally more prosperous and civilised, and generating greater equality. The manifesto referred confidently to the way the Conservatives were 'continuing to develop the social services'. The party promised for the future 'a massive enlargement of educational opportunity at every level . . . by 1965 we intend to rehouse at least another million people from the slums . . . there will be a big programme of hospital building; over the next five years our target is to double the present capital programme . . . our road programme is already the biggest we have ever had in this country. Over the next five years it will be twice as big as over the past five years . . .'

Some clouds did disturb the bright blue Tory sky. Memories of the Suez fiasco three years earlier when, among other things, Britain's relations with the United States were for a time very rocky, took some of the shine away from Conservative claims to be the party of international peace, justice and security. Then, to remind people how the Tories, even under Mr Macmillan, could not shake off their dubious City connections, a financial scandal broke out just as the election campaign began. A property company and building society ran into trouble; one of the central figures disappeared and was later traced to Israel; and Harold Wilson, then Labour's shadow chancellor, made his celebrated remark about the 'casino mentality of the City of London'.

Labour also ran a better organised, more professional campaign than the Conservatives. (Ah yes, how very different things used to be.) It used its daily news conferences to set each day's news agenda. It employed Anthony Wedgwood Benn, as he then was, as the bright young technocrat to present the party's election broadcasts. As election day approached, the opinion polls showed Labour gaining on the Conservatives; only in the last week did the gap widen again to give the Tories their victory.

THE THATCHERITE response to all this goes roughly as follows: Macmillan's 1959 victory was, in fact, built upon a series of illusions. For all the talk of spreading wealth about, the Tory party itself was based far more narrowly on the landed rich than it is today, and run undemocratically by ageing aristocrats meeting privately in tiny groups. Some of the amateurish weaknesses of Conservative Central Office 25 years ago could be traced back to that fact; no such mistakes would be made today.

More fundamentally, a Thatcher loyalist would, and some do, say that the economic philosophy of the Macmillan years did nothing to overcome the endemic weakness of the British economy that became obvious by the late 1960s. The signs were already there: West Germany's revival, the first challenges from Japanese technology, the gradual erosion of Britain's economic lead over France and Italy.

The fact that Britain's industrial and social fabric survived the second world war better than any other European country gave us a higher standard of living during the first 15 years after the war; and that standard of living was further enhanced by the phenomenal growth of world demand as post-war reconstruction took place. But all that did was to conceal the need for fundamental change. Macmillan's Tory party, the argument goes, was the accidental beneficiary of the temporary 1950s boom, not its architect; and it failed to see the problems to come.

IN A WAY it is a fair criticism. Rereading the 1959 Conservative manifesto, it is impossible to avoid noticing its complacency. For example: 'So long as Conservative policies of sound currency and expanding trade are continued, and unity at home is maintained, full employment is safe'. But to criticise that complacency is not the same thing as criticising the 'one nation' philosophy of the Tory party during the Macmillan years. Within the party Mrs Thatcher's most significant achievement has been to fuse together two separate points: Britain's industrial record of the 1950s and '60s, which is far from glorious, and the record of general economic management and social progress, which was in fact quite remarkable.

By locking these two separate arguments together, Mrs Thatcher has created the justification for her peculiarly vicious form of class war. Some people on the Left will say there is nothing new in this: the Tories have always been engaged in a class war. But if that was what they were about 25 years ago, they were masters at concealing the fact.

It is a measure of how successfully today's Tory leadership has hijacked the party that nobody could stand up now, read out the 1959 manifesto and say with a straight face 'the principles on which we fought then are the same as the principles on which we fight today'. Indeed, I shall make a modest wager — a tenner to Labour's fightback fund if I am wrong: when Mrs Thatcher makes her speech to her assembled admirers at Brighton this Friday, she will announce that it is 25 years to the week since she was first elected to Parliament, but she will say not a word about the manifesto on which she fought her first successful parliamentary campaign. □

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TORIES NEXT IN THE FIRING LINE

Patrick Jenkin's continuing attack on local government financing is getting the government into a deepening mess. Tony Travers argues that Tory controlled councils will be the next in line

ONCE UPON a time Conservative council leaders felt safe from things like grant penalties and rate capping. Before this government started churning out local government legislation, they expected the attack on public expenditure (including local authority spending) to be of an overall and general kind. The reduction in the percentage of total spending met by central government grants was the way of holding down spending. The central government grant reductions in 1976-7 and 1977-8, when Peter Shore was at the Department of the Environment, had certainly had this effect.

Even when the new 'block grant' system was introduced by the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act, the government's supporters in local authorities thought that they would be spared its penalising effects. Block grant was introduced, among other things, to reduce grant payments to individual authorities which chose to spend much above a government-set assessment of what they ought to spend. By 'tapering off' grant to the 'overspenders' the government hoped that the extra pressure on ratepayers (who would have to make up the difference) would discourage higher spending.

Despite the fact that they were all Tory-led, the local authorities' associations opposed the introduction of block grant. They did this because they believed that it would lead to greater control of local government. As the government struggled to get the Bill through the House of Lords, it was hinted in the press that the government had suggested to some Tory local authority leaders that 'block grant' would never adversely affect *their* councils.

Whether this hint of a deal was true or not, the grant did soon start to penalise Conservative councils. In June 1981, just after the start of the first year of block grant, the government announced that grant would be held back from any authority which chose to spend above a newly-set 'target'. Many Conservative councils were hit. In each year since then, faithful Tory shires and districts have been penalised. Even some councils which spent below their target found that their grant was falling.

Then in the 1983 Conservative Manifesto came the promise that steps would be taken to place a limit on rates. But, because the manifesto carefully explained that 'rate capping' was meant to deal with 'a number of grossly extravagant Labour authorities whose exorbitant rate demands have caused great distress both to businesses and domestic ratepayers', it was commonly assumed that Conservative councils would not be 'capped'. Tory council leaders were again wrong. Two of the first 18 authorities to be capped were under partial (Brent) or complete (Portsmouth) Conservative control. In the next year or two, others are almost certain to suffer the same fate.

Why has a Conservative govenment treated its own followers in such an unfriendly way? There are probably two main reasons: first, it seems less politically vindictive if *all* the councils selected for penalties are not controlled by opposition parties. Second, the pressure for cuts is coming from the Treasury and the Treasury is little influenced by the possibility that Conservative authorities might suffer.

Indeed, the Treasury's fundamental dislike of local government is quite unaffected by the fact that much of council spending is in the hands of Conservatives. The Treasury just wants the total to be as low as possible, so as to keep its overall public spending plans on track. The Department of the Environment is simply left with the problem of pushing through each new policy initiative. If it were not for Treasury pressure, the DoE would — in search of an easy life — probably have kept a much greater distance from individual authorities.

As the attempt to cut local authority spending continues, more and more of the government's political allies will find themselves 'rate-capped'. The criteria were used this year to select the councils to be limited in 1985-6: authorities which — in 1984-5 — spent 20 per cent or more above their 'grant-related expenditure' (the basic figure used to calculate how much central block grant a council is due and known as GRE) *and* which in addition spent 4 per cent or more above their 'target' (different from GRE and used to encourage compliance with government spending plans) were put on the rate-capping hit list for 1985-6.

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Many Conservative councils are currently spending well above GRE and, in some cases, above target as well.

These authorities are at risk from selective rate capping in two or more years' time. Once the government has tied down the first 18 high spenders, there will be Treasury pressure to go for the next batch of councils. Indeed, if the government is aiming at progressive downward shifts in local government current spending by way of rate limitation, it is almost inevitably that increasing numbers of councils will have to be included. This could lead to the Treasury finally winning its long-term battle to put 'cash limits' on the whole of council spending.

Spending above GRE or 'target' in 1984-5: selected authorities

Target	*%*
Blackpool	3.3
Northamptonshire	2.2
Bexley	2.0
Cambridgeshire	2.0
Isle of Wight (Lib)	2.0
Bedfordshire	2.0
Harrow	1.9
Richmond (Lib)	1.9
Merton	1.5
GRE	*%*
Brighton*	30.3
Hammersmith*	27.2
Waltham Forest*	20.7
Harrow	10.8
Hillingdon	10.6
Northampton	10.0
Blackpool	9.4
Bexley	6.4

* *No overall control*

THE CURRENT list of authorities overspending GRE and target includes some most unlikely names. The table above shows a number of councils which are controlled by Conservatives, Liberals or (in Brighton, Hammersmith & Fulham and Waltham Forest) Conservative-Liberal coalitions and which are spending well in excess of target or GRE in 1984-5. Those like Bexley, Harrow and Blackpool could easily fall into selective rate capping in future. They could certainly be affected by general rate limitation if the government invoked the wider powers it now has under Part II of the 1984 Rates Act.

New criteria (other than spending over GRE and target) could well encourage the Treasury to press for the inclusion of several county councils in rate capping. For example, the increase in current expenditute between 1978-9 and 1984-5 (that is, the period since the present government started its policies) is higher in several shire counties than in some of the

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Increases in current expenditure, 1978/9-1984/5

Rate-capped	%
Lambeth	100.24
Haringey	88.91
Sheffield	88.14
Portsmouth	83.70
Non rate-capped	%
Buckinghamshire	111.35
Northamptonshire	101.71
Somerset	95.80
Cambridgeshire	95.76
Berkshire	93.73
Essex	93.03

authorities to be rate-capped in 1985-6. The percentage increases in cash between the two years are given for four rate capped councils and six shire counties (see table above).

The government is free to choose any criteria when selecting authorities for limitation, so the higher spending shires should not think themselves permanently immune from rate capping. If total spending were not to fall in the way the government wants during the next few years (for example, if abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan counties were to prove expensive) many more authorities would be threatened.

Abolition of the GLC and the 'met' counties will in itself extend rate capping. Spending by what will be the Conservative-controlled London Fire Board will be under government control. Even if the majority of districts in the other metropolitan counties were to be won by the Conservatives in the 1986-1987 elections, the new fire, police and transport boards will be subject to central limits on spending and staffing.

The impact of rate limitation could thus, in one sense, become increasingly bi-partisan. Whatever Patrick Jenkin and the government now say about using the sweeping powers under the Rates Act, a future economic crisis or change in public spending plans could trigger widespread use of the legislation. The Treasury is always trying to find ways of further extending its already substantial controls over local authority finances.

What started as a policy to 'protect' ratepayers in a few Labour strongholds will now be spread to the Tory shires and mark another massive erosion of local government. □

RATES — 2

LINE STILL HOLDING

Joan Smith reports on the continuing tactical battle by Labour authorities against rate-capping

AT THE BEGINNING of last week, a rumour swept round the Labour councils on Patrick Jenkin's rate-capping list: one of their number, it was said, was about to break ranks and apply to the Department of the Environment for a 'redetermination' of its Whitehall imposed spending limit.

For any of the 16 Labour authorities on the Jenkin hit list to do so would be a major blow to the strategy of unity painstakingly hammered out at a series of meetings between May and July. After Patrick Jenkin unveiled his list of 18 'overspending' authorities on 26 July, leaders of the 16 Labour councils on it were able to announce they would boycott the procedure set up by the Rates Act which allows them to apply for 'derogation' — a process under which the Department of the Environment agrees to reconsider the council's spending limit in return for access to all the authority's accounts.

The decision not to go for derogation was vital for two reasons. First, the procedure hands over to the minister unprecedented power to interfere in how a council spends its money, without any guarantee that its spending limit will be eased in return. Second, and crucially, it would be a gesture of compliance with rate-capping legislation at a point in the poker game between government and councils when the cards have only just been dealt.

The deadline for applications was Monday, 1 October. When it apparently came and went without a single application — even Conservative-controlled Portsmouth and the hung council at Brent declined to apply — the councils appeared to have passed the first test with flying colours.

So the rumour that Lewisham Council in South London was actively negotiating with the Department caused consternation among leaders of the rate-capped councils as they assembled for the Labour Party conference in Blackpool. On Tuesday, Ron Stockbridge, leader of Lewisham, attended a meeting of the leaders at the resort.

Lewisham's treasurer, he said, had recently attended an unofficial meeting of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the professional body made up of local authority finance officers. Although some CIPFA members have been critical of rate-capping, they are inevitably in regular contact with the Department of the Environment — and key members are well informed about what concessions the government might be willing to make.

Signals had been given at this meeting, said Stockbridge, that councils who had used 'creative accountancy' — setting up special funds to get round penalties, for example — would be treated sympathetically if they applied for derogation. It would be possible to apply without triggering the minister's full powers of intervention in the council's affairs.

Stockbridge had told his officials to make inquiries as to whether this constituted an offer from the Department. The officials had calculated that Lewisham might be able to raise its spending limit by £8 million if the message was correct. But on the Friday before conference, they reported back that the Department had said there was no offer.

The following Monday, when Stockbridge reported these events back to Lewisham group, council officials asked his permission to go back to their source at CIPFA. When they did so, the source confirmed that councils with special funds could apply for a form of derogation without handing over control to the government.

At the Blackpool meeting the next day, Stockbridge revealed this apparent offer of partial derogation to other council leaders. They decided they did not want to apply and Stockbridge confirmed Lewisham would go it alone.

The next day, Wednesday of last week, the *Guardian* picked up a whiff of the story. It reported that the government had made 'an apparently generous verbal offer to Lewisham, one of the 18 councils to be rate-capped, to relax its spending limits'. In the following day's *Guardian*, the Department reacted, as one Lewisham councillor put it, 'like a scalded cat'. The claim that the government had offered to ease Lewisham's spending limit by £8 million was 'complete rubbish', the Department said. Talks had been held with a number of authorities, but no offer had been made.

This statement, appearing on Thursday morning, was only just true. Later that day, officials from Lewisham Council talked to Peter Owen, deputy secretary at the Department of the Environment, without the knowledge of the councillors. Owen, says Stockbridge, confirmed that an offer was on the table.

The council could apply for consideration of its 'special funds' without filling in sections of the derogation form which demand other financial information — in effect, the council could apply for partial derogation without conceding to the Department the wide powers triggered off under the Rules Act by an application for full formal derogation.

How tempting an offer this is can be seen by looking at Lewisham's financial position. The council will probably 'overspend' its limit by £1.5 million in the present financial year. Its officers have calculated that next year even a standstill budget would come out at £92 million. The government has set it a spending limit of only £79 million.

When council officials reported their talks back to a meeting of the council's policy committee on Thursday evening, councillors were dumbfounded. Some Labour councillors were tempted to apply for partial derogation to ease the blow of rate-capping, which has faced the council with the possibility of savage cuts — the loss of 3,000 jobs, for instance. It is a measure of the importance placed on a unified strategy by all the councils that Stockbridge was able to persuade Labour members to turn down the offer and hold to a policy of defiance.

THE STORY of the council that nearly went for derogation is highly significant. If even one council had applied and been treated sympathetically, the government would have been able to traduce others in public for not

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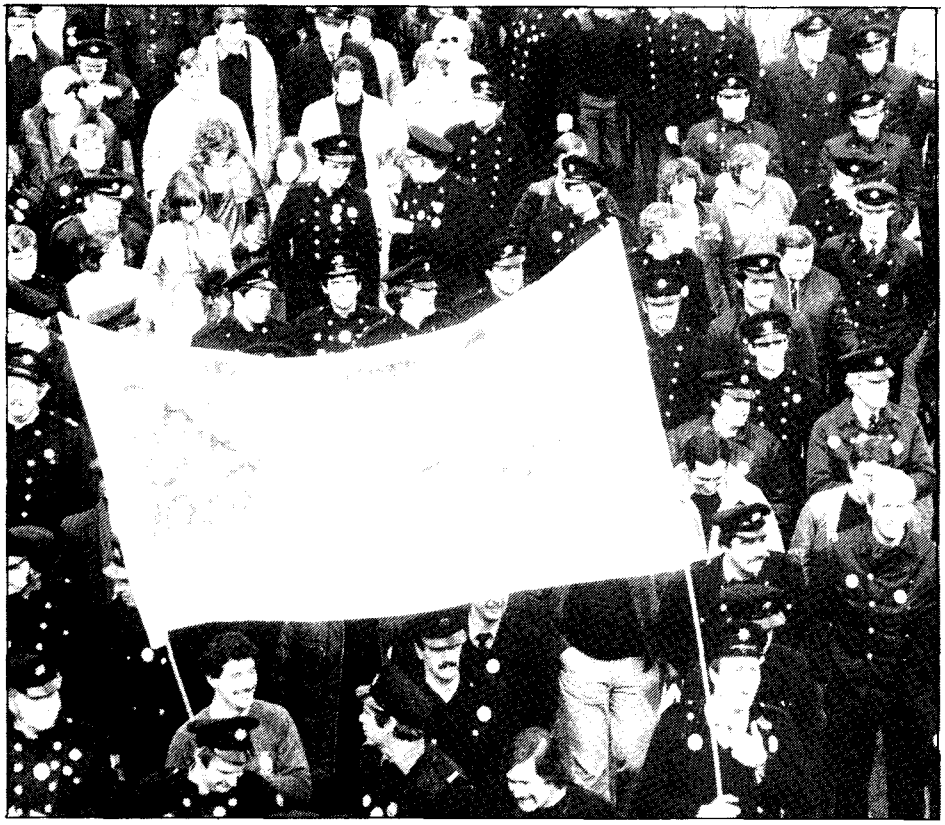

Fire fighters challenge Tories' local government policies, Democracy Day, 29 March 1984

taking advantage of the procedure.

It is widely thought that this is one reason why Conservative-controlled Portsmouth found itself on the list. Unfortunately for the government, the Portsmouth council has decided instead to try to implement cuts of £1.4 million to get down to its rate-cap limit of £16.7 million. Like the Labour councils, Portsmouth seems to have been nervous of the wide government powers of intervention involved in derogation applications. 'If you go for redetermination, obviously you would be losing out,' a spokeswoman said last week.

The government also seems to have had hopes of Thamesdown, the anonymous name for the Labour-controlled town of Swindon. Tony Huzzey, the council's deputy leader, says Thamesdown councillors were put under pressure to go for derogation by one of the area's three MPs, Simon Coombs, who made several public statements about sympathetic treatment just before the council's crucial vote on derogation. Coombs is in a position to know what's going on: he is Parliamentary Private Secretary to Kenneth Baker, the new local government minister.

The government still hasn't given up hope. It has decided that the deadline for applications for derogation is flexible, instead of expiring as originally indicated on 1 October. Its apparent jumpiness about rate-capping has also driven it into open hypocrisy. Last Thursday, several national newspapers and local papers in areas affected by rate-capping carried full-page ads by the Department of the Environment.

The ads, headed 'Protecting The Ratepayer', are part of a £500,000 campaign which involves sending leaflets direct to five million ratepayers. The Department of the Environment describes the ads as an 'information' campaign — and so, it claims, quite different from the campaigns run by councils in opposition to rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan authorities, which have been criticised by the government.

'It will still be up to local councillors to decide what they want to spend their money on,' the adverts insist. 'Limiting the rates does not mean that the Secretary of State takes over. And if they feel the limit on their spending is unreasonable the law provides a right of appeal.' They do not mention that this 'right of appeal' is just our old friend 'derogation', as a result of which the Secretary of State can take over the running of the council, if he wishes.

SOME MEMBERS of rate-capped councils think the government's efforts to persuade councils to apply for derogation are due to the sudden realisation of what they have taken on. The method of setting the limits failed to recognise the degree of 'creative accounting' and other devices used by councils to get round the penalties incurred so far.

Although the government has claimed that the rate-capping legislation was designed simply to freeze council spending at this year's level, the combined effects of inflation and the use of special funds in previous years mean the cuts go much deeper. In Leicester, the rate-cap limit implies an actual cut of more than 12 per cent in spending. Haringey, in North London, used £9.5 million from its balances to maintain services this year, so the effect of meeting the rate-cap limit would be a cut of 13 per cent. Councillors say they would — among other measures — need to stop milk in primary schools, close all nurseries, close old people's homes, increase council house rents, reduce street lighting by 40 per cent and cut jobs by 1,500 to meet the spending limit imposed by Patrick Jenkin.

The very savagery of the cuts is, according to some rate-capped councillors, what has driven councils ranging from Merseyside to Basildon together in a show of unity so far. The cuts are so deep that defence is the only possible strategy, in spite of the distaste of some Labour leaders for a course which looks like taking the party into a policy of illegality.

The question now is how long that unity can hold. One problem is that the 'precepting authorities', which get the the authorities below them to collect their rates — the GLC, the ILEA, Merseyside and South Yorkshire — are legally obliged to set a rate next March. The other authorities do not have a time limit and so could, as things now stand, start the next financial year without having set a rate at all. (This was the tactic successfully followed by Liverpool City Council in the current financial year, until central government eventually agreed to provide more money.) They believe that this tactic may provoke the government into yet another piece of legislation — the Rates (Trying Again) Act 1984, perhaps — which will fix a statutory date by which lower-tier authorities have to set a rate.

If such a law is introduced, one possibility now being discussed is that of setting a rate above the amount allowed by government, while claiming that unspecified savings will be made to bring the figure down to the limit. Some councillors believe that as long as they go on spending money on legal purposes, the government would be hard pushed to intervene until well into the financial year.

If the cash does begin to run out, the London Labour authorities have decided to default on interest payments rather than cut staff or services. The combined debt of the London rate-capped boroughs alone is more than £6 billion, 40 per cent of it owed to building societies. 'I think the chaos that a disruption in local government would cause to financial markets is as great as the disruption caused by the threat of bankruptcy in a Third World country,' says Margaret Hodge, leader of Islington Council.

The councils have a legal obligation to pay debt charges first, so this move would be in defiance of the law. The councils are already changing their standing orders to prevent officers making decisions about whom to pay without reference to elected members. 'We'd rather pay the workforce than the debt,' says Margaret Hodge.

At the moment, neither side knows how far the other will go. The government hopes the councillors will draw back from illegality for fear of being surcharged and disqualified. It also has the parliamentary majority to bring further legislation as loopholes appear in the Acts passed so far. On the other hand, the cuts demanded are far too great for most Labour councillors to stomach.

Paradoxically, the government's own strength may turn out to be a disadvantage. Undoubtedly Patrick Jenkin has the power, if faced with out-and-out defiance involving law-breaking, to send in commissioners. Last month, however, speaking at the AMA conference in Doncaster, Jenkin said: 'We are not interested in the detailed running of any council. Our concern is only with the overall figures.' Jenkin's fear must be that if the councils are seriously intent on defiance, he may go down in history as the Secretary of State for the Environment, for Merseyside, for South Yorkshire, for Leicester, and for large parts of London — not to mention Basildon. □

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Beryl B, Mobil's newest North Sea oil production platform, doesn't go in for flamboyance. Instead of lighting the night sky with a fiery display from her flare stack, Beryl B plans on holding back the burning off of excess gas. There will, however, be more to Beryl's comparatively small flame than mere modesty.

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TOWARDS EFFICIENT SOCIALISM

Last week John Grahl examined the role of market forces in socialist economic theory. Here Alec Nove ripostes

AS I SEE IT, anyone who takes socialism seriously faces three basic problems today. One is to define in some acceptable way what is meant by socialism, and thereby the long-term aims or perspectives of a socialist movement. The second is the very different task of looking at today's policies, given the present state of the economy, of public opinion, the limits of the possible. The third is to react to what Grahl calls the challenge of neo-liberalism. There is perhaps a fourth: what kind of economics should a Labour or social democratic movement espouse?

My book on 'Feasible socialism', to which Grahl refers, was primarily concerned to discuss the first question, claiming that Marx's vision was, in the last analysis, neither a feasible nor an attractive utopia. It endeavoured to sketch out a possible alternative kind of reasonably human, democratic and tolerably efficient system which could be called socialist. It was not advocacy of a politically realisable aim, but more as a theoretical exercise: if Marx's vision was faulty and inherently inpracticable, then what alternative could there be, which might work and still deserve the label 'socialist'?

This leaves open the question of its desirability, of its attractiveness even as a long-term programme. A mixed economy, with a vitally important role for money and markets, may seem to lack the inspirational quality of Marx's vision, but in any case it would require measures which have little electoral, or even practical, appeal. Anything deserving the name of socialism requires the larger part of the economy to be socially owned, but there is certainly no majority today for a massive increase in nationalisation, and I for one would not propose such a thing. There is, therefore, a big gap between socialism as a long-term objective and the practical policies of today — a gap of which any socialist must be very conscious, and which I do not know how to bridge.

MEANWHILE, the policies which are being foisted on the Labour Party by left-wing activists simply make no sense. Some of their authors are would-be revolutionaries, out to 'smash the system'. But others are just confused. Faced by a government characterised by ideological extremism, what sort of alternative does Labour present? How can one speak seriously of opposing all and any incomes policy or 'wage restraint', or advocate price and import controls, with such cavalier disregard for the consequences? Can anyone contemplate a serious government deciding that *no* pit be closed on *any* economic grounds whatsoever?

I agree that Hayek and other 'neo-liberals' are rather absurd when they attribute unemployment in general, Britain's exceptionally high unemployment in particular, solely to 'workers pricing themselves out of jobs' and to trade unions. Firms close, jobs are lost, also, as a result of faulty investment decisions (including the fault of not investing), managerial inefficiency, poor design, weak marketing, lack of after-sales service; there can be many reasons. But union attitudes must be taken seriously as one important factor.

Should we not recall how the dockers obstructed containersation, resisted modern equipment at Tilbury and elsewhere, until much business was permanently lost to Rotterdam and Hamburg? Demarcation problems in shipyards, the car industry, engineering, obstruction of modern job training, the battles to prevent modern equipment being used in printing and on television, should be well known. Alas, Wilfred Beckerman, by no means an unsympathetic economist, is perfectly right; commenting on the notion that trade unions will one day learn to stop opposing technical innovation, he remarked: 'This vastly exaggerates the capacity of trade union leaders to learn anything'. Yes, I know it is all done 'in defence of jobs', but surely the common denominator is best describes as extreme myopia: in the end jobs are lost, in the docks, in printing, in shipyards. There is an unholy alliance between the left-extremists and enrenched conservatives, who join together to resist change. (Bertrand Russell once remarked that it is too much to expect people not to pursue self-interest, but it should be *enlightened* self-interest.)

Faced with the mindless Militant, the neo-liberal challenge can indeed score easy victories. At least it can refer to some coherent principles, and not slogans. At least it does stress the fact that the market mechanism has its inner logic, that those who ignore elementary economic laws have to pay for their ignorance. Since no sensible socialist can seriously imagine eliminating the market (i.e., production of goods and services for sale or exchange) even in the long run, no policy makes sense unless it ensures the smooth functioning of the market sector. The neo-liberals are, however, highly vulnerable, in respect both of theory and policy.

BECKERMAN put it well: 'The mistakes of policy are much the same as those of the 1930s' but they are now buttressed by far more sophisticated and intellectually powerful errors in economic theory'. In my view, the next generation will puzzle over how such errors could possibly have seemed 'intellectually powerful'. They will wonder incredulously how it was possible to have earmarked literally not a penny of the oil-revenue windfall for modernizing Britain's productive capacity, infrastructure, quality of life. They will be incredulous about that extraordinary notion, 'rational expectations': no one doubts that expectations affect outcomes, but to reach the conclusion that fiscal policy cannot achieve anything is an amazing leap of logic. This at a time when prices, interest rates, the dollar rate of exchange, can and do fluctuate irrationally and unpredictably, and when American recovery has visibly been stimulated by the largest budget deficit in recorded history.

The hoary notion of 'crowding out', which one might have thought to have been laid to rest once and for all by Keynes, is solemnly refurbished: with millions of people out of work and much unused productive capacity, we are asked to believe that government expenditure will 'crowd out' private investment.

Another contemporary fad likely to cause amusement to the next generation is 'supply side' economics. Starting from the not unreasonable proposition that excessive tax rates can be a disincentive to work and savings, the doctrine leads it adepts to the conclusion that the rich do not work because they are not rich enough, and the poor because they are not poor enough. What the supply siders never in fact consider is productive capacity, i.e. supply, since, as believers in *laissez faire*, they assume that it will adjust itself as required, apparently with great speed.

This seems also to be the Treasury response to the question of how Britain's diminishing manufacturing capacity will cope with the situation that will follow the exhaustion of North Sea oil: the fall in the value of the pound will make our manufactures more competitive. They will then revive, like tropical plants at the end of the dry season. Only in this instance the equipment will have been sold or scrapped, and what then?

THESE AND SIMILAR errors relate to the 'macro' level. These are reinforced by errors of 'micro' theory. One can be called 'misplaced marginalism' a tendency to fragment systems and networks, which explains (for instance) 'hiving off' Sealink, paying no attention to the fact that ships connect with trains. A worse example, here and in the United States, is breaking up so natural a monopoly as the telephone service.

The refusal to take into account the public service aspect of public services leads to what might be called purposeless privatization. 'Purposeless' here has two meanings. One is that privatisation, if introduced into areas in which competition is either absent or undesirable, has no (non-ideological) purpose. The other is that efficiency *criteria* are detached from purpose, an error which no private corporation would commit. Thus imagine ICI, evaluating the efficiency of its transport department without reference to the punctuality with which it collects and delivers goods! Yet the Serpell report recommended

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that the already extremely high charges for peak travel in the London area be greatly increased, which may indeed raise more revenue, but makes sense only if the purpose of public transport were not to reduce congestion, to wean people from travelling to work in their cars.

One thinks of all the many cities in countries of very different political complexions where underground (metro) lines have been built: Washington, Mexico City, Munich, Amsterdam, Leningrad, Stockholm, Milan... Britain's one example, Tyneside, was completed only because the present government was too late to stop it. Of course all are loss-makers, and so an unjustified investment on purely 'profit and loss' accounting grounds. The closing of post offices that 'do not pay' is another example of applying inappropriate marginalist economics to public services.

The neo-liberals pass over in silence the consequences of extremely unequal initial distribution of property; for them a very high income derived from merely allowing others to use capital or land is rational and represents a contribution to production analagous to actually working, whether in the manager's office or on the factory floor. Also, as Kurt Rothschild pointed out long ago in his introduction to the Penguin reader on power in economics, power is a dimension most economists prefer to ignore. (In health and education, too, the neo-liberal extremists are hard at work to reduce public provision.)

Accepting, then, that the market and enterprise have vital roles to play in competitive supply of a very wide range of goods and services, we can and should defend public provision in sectors where micro-profitability is either misleading or irrelevant. We should and can challenge the validity of the naive neo-*laissez faire* assumptions of neo-liberalism. Unemployment is *not* due only to trade unions, markets do *not* all clear, the economy is *not* automatically self-equilibrating.

Which leads one to another big question: what sort of economics are needed? The Hungarian economist Janos Kornai entitled one of his books *Anti equilibrium*, and with reason. While the notion of an economy in 'equilibrium' is a useful assumption for elementary exposition of economic theory, the implications of the equilibrium approach are inherently non-dynamic, assume away most of the real problems of the real economy.

Even so human and sympathetic an economist as James Meade bases his formal analysis on assumptions of static equilibrium. In my view, the attack on neo-classical economic orthodoxy misses its target by challenging its *logical* consistency. The weak spot is its lack of *realism*, increasingly reinforced by the over-use of mathematical techniques. Other economists also operate in an abstract world, in which demand, money, inflation, the State and much else are virtually ignored. For obvious reasons Marxist theory cannot serve as a guide to economic policy, in east or west (nor was it intended for any such purpose).

A realistic, progressive, dynamic and applicable economics remains to be written — though it is much easier to write these words than to try to fill the gap. □

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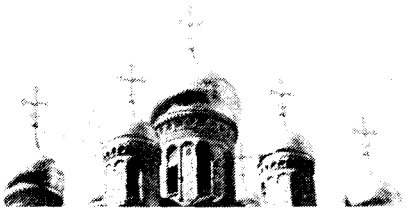

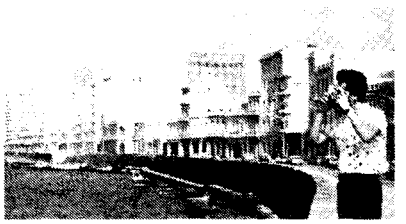

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AIN'T GONNA PAY FOR WAR NO MORE

Bob Dent looks at the potential for putting a spanner in the military machine by withholding taxes

Bob Dent

Martin Howard of Tax Direction Now

'WE ARE expecting the bailiffs any day. They could come in and remove over £1,000 worth of equipment', said Dafydd Iwan, a director of Sain Records of Llanwnda, Caernarfon. For nearly a year the company has been withholding a proportion of its employees' PAYE tax as a protest against the government's expenditure on armaments.

All 15 employees support the move and at the County Court in Llangefni last July tried to present a cheque for nearly £700, payable to the NHS, in settlement of the tax owed. 'We had chosen a department like the Health Service because this is a sector where financial cuts hit hard,' Mr Iwan, a national chairperson of Plaid Cymru told the court.

Judge Eifion Roberts, however, rejected the move saying that it would be impossible to govern a democratic country if everyone behaved in such a manner and ordered the tax to be paid normally. But the tax is still being withheld and the Inland Revenue, somewhat surprisingly, have yet to make a move.

The case of Sain Records is one of about 50 where people have withheld a proportion of their tax in protest against defence policies. The amount involved is usually about 12-13 per cent,representing the proportion of government expenditure which goes on defence. These cases represent the sharp end of the Peace Tax Campaign whose aim is to change the law to establish a statutory right for individuals to divert their share of defence taxes to a specially constituted Peacemaking Fund.

The Peace Tax Campaign bases its case on the recognition in the country of conscientious objection established during the First World War following the Conscription Act of 1916. Today, the argument goes, modern warfare, particularly its nuclear variant, makes the role of individual combattant less significant but dragoons all citizens by making them pay huge taxes to support the war machine. The right to conscientious objection should thus be extended to those who wish to refused to pay for the war machine.

The campaign has over 6,000 supporters including MPs, bishops and peers and a total of 16,000 have signed a supportive petition. Fifty MPs have backed an Early Day Motion endorsing the aims of the campaign. For those campaigners who want to take action immediately, a special section of the campaign, Tax Direction Now, has been established.

In the spring of 1981, Jenny Aste, a book-binder from York, had a diversionary cheque made out to the Ministry of Overseas Development rejected by the Inland Revenue. Alex Lyon, her MP, remonstrated on her behalf and the cheque was accepted. But following media publicity, Whitehall directed that no such arrangements should be made and Jenny Aste's cheque was returned.

Following another tax demand Ms Aste sent another diversionary cheque, had it rejected and was threatened with legal action. But the dilemma for the Inland Revenue was that Jenny Aste, like all subsequent tax diversionists, was not refusing to pay her taxes. She merely wanted to try to ensure they were not used for military purposes. She was told that a cheque made payable to 'Inland Revenue' but crossed 'Overseas Development Fund a/c' would be acceptable. But the cheque eventually found its way into the general Inland Revenue Fund, not the other account as crossed and as intended. Other similar cheques have also been accepted but then paid into the Inland Revenue's general fund. Martin Howard, co-ordinator of Tax Direction Now, describes the tax authority's actions as 'embezzlement or fraudulent conversion, or possibly both!'

THE LEGAL POSITION in this country is not too favourable at the moment towards people withholding part of their taxes. In a celebrated case in 1967, still used as precedent, the High Court ruled against Howard Cheney, a peace activist who was withholding tax on the grounds that the government's defence posture was conspiracy to cause genocide and contrary to international law. Although Parliament passed the Genocide Act in 1969, which in theory seems to make modern nuclear weaponry illegal, county court judges have so far, in their dealings with tax rebels, refused to accept that the government's defence posture violates the act. Tax Direction supporters are waiting for what they regard as a watertight case before going to appeal, as any adverse High Court ruling will influence future decisions in lower courts.

Last year both Pamela Ross and Tony Crofts also has their cases turned down by the European Commision of Human Rights. The commission argued that the operation of taxation law did not impinge upon the freedom to manifest philosophical convictions, thus apparently denying the applicants' argument that tax diversion is not just motivated by, or consistent with, pacifism but actually necessary to its manifestation in practice.

As the law now stands, you can't actually go to jail for witholding tax, but courts can send bailiffs to seize goods to be auctioned off to raise the value of the tax owed. And in a few cases the authorities have resorted to a 'garnishee' order, whereby money is taken directly out of a defendant's bank account without their permission.

So far the majority of people witholding or attempting to divert their taxes have been self-employed and thus responsible for paying their own tax. The case of Sain Records, however, raises the spectre of groups of employees collectively witholding tax — a prospect which, even if it only involved political organisations, churches and trade unions, would cause serious problems for the government. It would be a nightmare if the various 'nuclear free zone' councils started thinking along similar lines to Leicester City Council who have sent out a letter to the local authority unions raising the possibility of witholding tax for any council employees willing.

Already, however, Sain Records has been joined by another, larger, organisation. Approximately one third of the 120 employees at Friends House, the Quakers' central office in London, have been witholding taxes for ten months. The Inland Revenue has not, so far, taken any action. But in cases like this, it is the employers, rather than employees, who are liable in any proceedings for the recovery of unpaid taxes.

The Peace Tax Campaign is of course directed at the government and its military policies rather than the tax-collecting authorities. Their aim is to establish the right to conscientous objection rather than to create a tax revolt as such. The campaigners, after all, do not want to refuse to pay taxes, they are concerned that public money (the government takes an average £8 a week from each adult for military spending) is spent on more peaceful purposes. As campaign chair Gerald Drewett, himself an Inspector of Taxes until his resignation in March this year, says. . .'It's not a question of taxation. It's a question of human rights.' □

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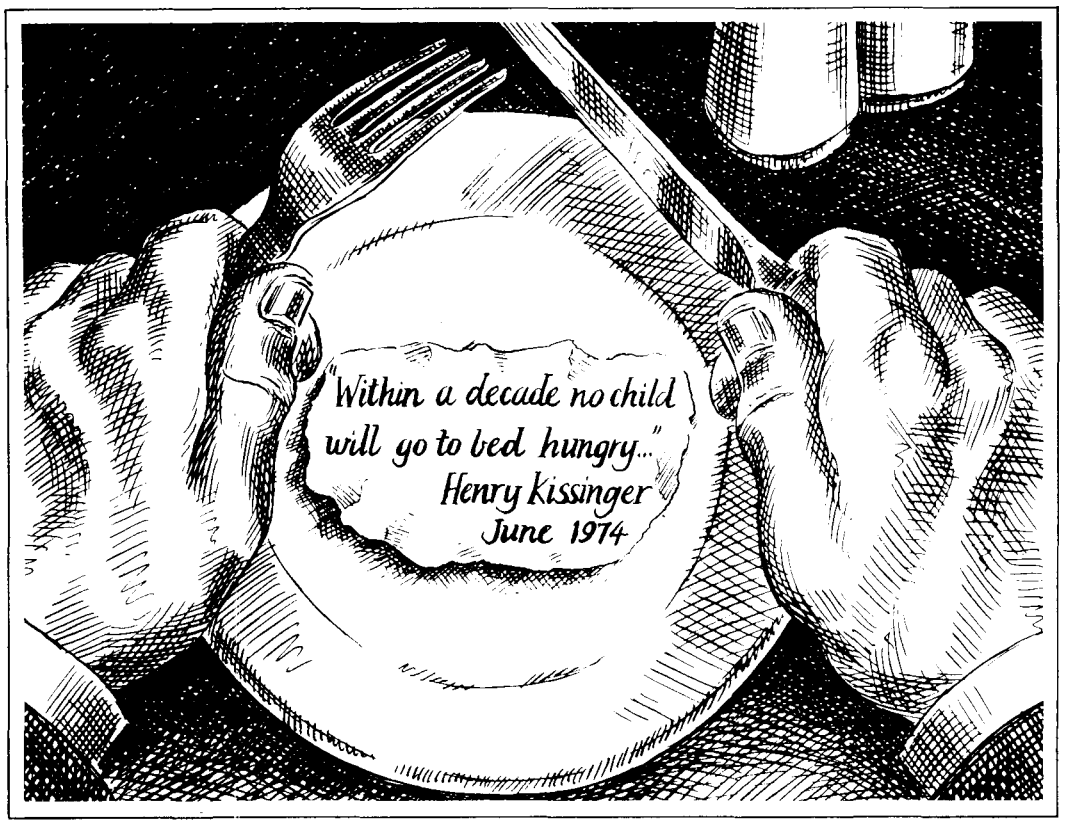

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FERDINAND MOUNT
on Wealth:
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P.J. KAVANAGH
on Faith:
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on Bliss:
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DEAR DIARY . . .

Eileen O'Connor's record of her thoughts when she took part in a screening test, and read the papers

Monday, 18 June: Wake up feeling fine. Drink coffee by fourth-floor window, and watch joggers pass in review below. Try to dispel vague sense of unease which this inspires by dashing off following letter to the *Guardian*:

> Sir
> Is it an accident that the obsession with physical health on the part of the affluent members of our society seems to be increasing in direct proportion to the increase in poverty and unemployment?
> Perhaps it might be interesting if some of the experts at present extolling the body beautiful could take time out to examine what is happening to the minds or souls of those who are following their advice.
> There is something sinister in the thought of all those healthy bodies stalking the earth, deaf, dumb, and blind to the human misery which surrounds them. Could it be that some malignant mutation is occurring by which we are doomed to rot from the head down? If so, is it the decay in the individual which has triggered off the decay in the body politic or vice versa? Either way, there is a strong smell of rotting fish about.
> Yours faithfully

Wonder whether I am being unfair. How can I be sure that they are all affluent? Some of them could be unemployed, heroin-addicted adolescents. Think not. Sign and post letter. Feel mean. Justify myself by quoting Galbraith's dictum about afflicting the comfortable.

Thursday, 21 June: Still feeling fine. Find letter on mat from my doctor asking me to participate in a screening test for bowel cancer. Merde! The gods have a strange sense of humour. Perhaps they too have been reading Galbraith.

Pick myself up off the floor. Totter into the bathroom. With shaking hands start to follow instructions: '. . . first place plenty of toilet tissue in the lavatory bowl, so that the motion will remain visible above the water . . .' Stop, and ask myself what I'm doing. Why am I allowing the doctors in my group practice, whom I have had occasion to consult no more than five times in the last 30 years (the last time at least ten years ago), to reduce me in a matter of seconds from a rational and apparently healthy member of the human race into a bowel-fixated zombie?

Send message to the gods explaining that my letter to the *Guardian* did not mean that I was against health per se, or even against a healthy lifestyle, only against an unhealthy health obsession.

Gods send message back that if I want to live for ever I had better follow instructions and 'take the test card, open flap, using applicator stick place one or more thin smears of specimen from different areas of the motion . . .'

Respectfully explain that I have no objection to living for ever but what guarantees can they give? How will they answer when, on my death bed, I shake my fists at them and rage: 'But I can't be dying, dammit, I'm a law-abiding, self-respecting, responsible, property-owning democrat, and I was given clearly to understand that as such I would be guaranteed eternal life. I want my money back'.

No answer.

Have I offended them? Decide to make amends by following instructions. Problem! Angst has produced constipation!

Wander disconsolately into kitchen and make cup of strong black coffee. Light a cigarette. Sit wreathed in smoke and gloom. As the gods are no longer talking to me, commune with myself.

Screening tests are important. There are millions of perfectly healthy people out there worried sick by the thought that they might be dying. Have I the right to deny them the comfort of a free screening test?

Certainly not.

On the other hand, what about all those who are already seriously ill? Are they sufficiently well cared for that we can afford to use our limited resources to find out if the apparently healthy are about to become ill?

At this point the gods intervene and testily inform me that if the seriously ill had worried enough about being ill when they were well they would never have become ill: ergo, they deserve whatever happened to them, and if I don't want to share their fate I had better just do what the experts tell me and stop asking a lot of stupid questions.

Suitably cowed I make a second cup of coffee and light another cigarette. Switch on the television: miners and police thumping each other over the head with bricks and batons; unemployment; urban decay; Third World poverty and malnutrition.

Begin to work myself up into a state of righteous indignation. If the miners,

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unemployed, et al, would just pull themselves together and start cultivating healthy minds in healthy bodies, all their problems would be solved, and law-abiding citizens like me could concentrate on the state of our bowels in peace.

Decide the time has come to get my priorities right. Once again head for the bathroom. Follow instructions to the letter and send off specimen without delay. Fired with a convert's zeal follow it up with request for membership application forms to the National Front, Conservative Party and SDP, all of whom seem to share my new-found views on the miners et al. Also send off request for application forms to BUPA and PPP with a view to annual screening tests on every portion of my anatomy. Spend the rest of the day trying to decide on the most suitable outfit to wear for jogging.

Friday, 22 June: Note press reports that the National Front supports the miners' strike. Wonder whether Arthur Scargill understands the role of the agent provocateur: if so, I don't think his present stance of refusing to condemn violence is the answer. Odd and rather ominous that a man of his experience should have allowed himself to be so neatly out-manoeuvred. Are he and the other miners' leaders so imbued with the masculine ethos of aggression that it has blinded them to the political realities? Perhaps they could learn a few lessons from the women of Greenham Common.

Remind myself that I now have a new set of values: I am not a miner and what happens to them is not my concern.

After a jog through Regents Park eat a bowl of brown rice and spend two hours meditating. End the day with a rendering of an up-dated version of the national anthem: God save our gracious Prime Minister, etc. Wonder whether the Queen has made any contingency plans. I hope so, she seems to be quite a pleasant woman.

Saturday, 23 June: Rather exhausted but filled with a sense of achievement. I've got my small world nicely sorted out and that, according to my new philosophy, is all that matters.

Monday, 25 June: Worried sick. Just received form from BUPA. Annual screening tests too expensive. Suddenly aware of menacing pains in parts of my body I didn't know existed. Am I doomed? Must ring my doctor. How have I managed to get by all these years without ringing my doctor? I could be dying . . . □

This England

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□Continental MPs demanded that the name of the station be changed because it commemorated the famous British victory over Napoleon. Calling the rail terminus Waterloo brought back 'offensive' memories of the war between two Common Market countries, the European Parliament was told. The idea from the Parliament's education committee is designed to promote greater harmony in the EEC. But last night, furious British Euro MPs were on the warpath. Barrister Geoff Hoon, MEP for Derbyshire said, 'I will fight any plan to rename Waterloo Station.' — *Daily Star* (George Moor)

Whatever happened to regulation?

Phillip Whitehead

ONLY ONE THING has protected us in Britain from cheapskate broadcasting; the notion that in the last resort the airwaves are public property, held in trust. It may seem no big deal, but the system of regulated diversity built around the device of the public authority has allowed a wider range of programming than the admass market would otherwise have supplied.

Not necessarily better, not quality against pap, certainly not rival convictions instead of regularised 'balance'; we do not have to be superior about it. But for all the limitations, and the narrow range of the 'great and the good' who exercised regulatory authority, there was an insistence implicit in their actions that good broadcasting should widen choices.

Now the day of the regulators may be past. We had better wake up to the consequences. Scarcity of airwaves encouraged regulation. Apparent plenty for broad and narrowcasting seems to make it otiose. Why impose standards when anyone can get a cable franchise, or share an encoded satellite signal?

The mutation of the IBA is now apparent. The pedagogic regime of Sir Brian Young and Lady Plowden has been replaced by that of Mr John Whitney and Lord Thomson. Mr Whitney is the former Managing Director of Capital Radio. He can slip between the balance sheets with the best of his former peers. But he watches boardroom battles with equanimity, even when they fundamentally alter the nature of the company operating a franchise awarded by the IBA.

The strife-ridden TV-am has gone through more quick changes than a bedroom farce. The Aitken cousins, and their friend Kerry Packer, would never have been awarded the breakfast television franchise by the IBA. The programmes put on by the station do not resemble those promised. Department after department has gone. So has the man brought in to beat the BBC for audiences, Greg 'Never trust an Australian' Dyke, along with every single programme executive who graced the franchise application. (Last out was TV-am's consumer champion, Lynn Faulds Wood of 'Alarm Call', whose exposés of commercial conmen have been too hot to handle for a station nervous of its advertisers.)

The IBA will say that, if it had pronounced sentence of death, the Aitkens would have kissed the rope. The staff would have been left twisting in the wind. But there were — and are — the consortia spurned three years ago, some ready to reapply in the knowledge that, once the Equity strike was settled, the station would move into profit — as it has, though with a mountainous debt. Fourteen years ago the IBA forced Murdoch to reduce his holding in London Weekend Television and imposed a new chairman, John Freeman, in pursuit of higher standards. What it does now, it does covertly; and the lesson is not lost in other boardrooms.

And now we are to have a new authority, to regulate the bounties of cable television. It actually comes into being *after* the eleven companies it must notionally oversee. They have been picked already, to be the outriders of Ken Baker's great new entertainment grid. Baker, at the Department of Industry the most naive of Mrs Thatcher's junior ministers, believed that he would get a national cable system cheap, if it was 'entertainment led'.

He expected a queue of patriotic entrepreneurs, eager to spend a fortune on the latest optic-fibre-switched-star systems, cabling town and suburb, rich and poor alike. It is not going well. The technology is not ready. The take-up is dismal. The dates and profitability are being revised by the hour.

So the buzz is that the hungry sheep will expect to be fed. They will want minimum regulation on American imports. They will explain that they can only use or recycle old technology, and that in the most profitable and well-heeled parts of town. They will want exclusivity on events which are now carried to everyone. They will want very, very long leases. Otherwise they will threaten to die, and that would never do. Watch this column as Mr Richard H. Burton takes the chair of the new cable body. I shall be very surprised if any of the attempts at regulation piously proposed by Parliament in fact survive the cable companies' first year.

In the British context, the new unregulated freedom might actually reduce genuine choice. Only a few very powerful cable interests will survive. (No prizes for guessing which megalomillionaires will be playing this bingo!) Their systems will carry an entertainment package, heavily dependent on US input, building its audience at the expense of the national networks, which provide a service at the same cost to everyone in the country, regardless of whether they live in a rich or poor, metropolitan or remote, area.

Those networks, already under pressure from the development of VCRs and overseas satellite broadcasting, will try to cling on to a diminishing mass audience. They know only one way to fight a ratings war. With survival the objective, the pressure will be on a more compliant IBA to lower its guard. The murmurs that the BBC should meet its increased costs by advertising on BBC1 will grow louder. Within a very few years the changed balance between constraint and competition will have produced something very like the US model, in which genuine public broadcasters carry a begging bowl with their microphone. □

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DIARY

One thing only on the Labour Party conference. It's true that Kinnock proposed one-member-one-vote in an opportunist way. But the principle is wholly positive. All members should be able to vote on the selection and re-selection of their local MP. And why, if they can't get a baby-sitter, should they be disenfranchized? The Left must abandon its We Know Bestism.

○

The only oppressive aspect of writing this diary is that I feel obliged to read the lucubrations of so many others. They are, I'm told, the sea that I swim in — appalling thought. All this by way of explanation for my reading the *Spectator*. Normally I would only look at it for an article by James Fenton or Christopher Hitchens. Now I even scan Peregrine Worsthorne's accounts of his dinner parties. Recently he described how

> a very intelligent and witty senior CIA official explained to a group of us that the Soviet Union is now so much weaker economically, medically and managerially than the United States that it is only a question of time — possibly only a few years — before it falls decisively behind militarily as well.

The CIA's argument deserves reproduction in full, but it was Worsthorne's dinner party, not mine. In effect, Washington's view is that it is about to win the Cold War unless Europe gives Moscow economic help. America's breakthrough in anti-missile technology will shield it from any conceivable Russian response and thus make the Soviets completely vulnerable to a US first strike. The danger over the next few years is that the Soviet leaders will be unable to adapt to American supremacy and will precipitate a war in the course of their decline.

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Worsthorne's purpose in relating all this was to lament the absence these days of such talk of global power from the dinner tables of London. As soon as the US guest left, the conversation slipped back to shallow gossip. It seems that among the English nowadays only socialists chat about world affairs. It did not strike him as an irony, however, that, as the governments of Western Europe from Thatcher to Mitterrand arm themselves yet further against the 'Soviet threat', they are playing the American game. I had another reaction also. I had just read J.B. Priestley's article on 'Britain and Nuclear Bombs', originally published in the *New Statesman* in November 1957. It helped inspire the foundation of CND and is reproduced in the current issue of *Sanity*. Condemning the reckless stockpiling of nuclear weapons, Priestley referred to a 'boastful confidence in public and a mounting fear in private'. How much preferable that was, we can now see, to the mounting of fear and alarmism in public with such boastful confidence in private!

○

Speaking of disarmament I have to tell you that Bruce Kent has unilaterally altered the rules of engagement. . .Earlier this year I complained about CND's Christmas crackers. Instead of jokes they had frightfully predictable quotations from NATO generals, added to which they failed to go bang when pulled. The Monsignor whipped round in fine style to give 'Islander' a hilarious fall-out shelter and to deliver a promise that this year there really would be good jokes. He has not actually broken his word. Instead, crackers have been removed completely from CND's 1984 offerings for seasonal cheer. While he promised that there would be jokes *in* the crackers, you see, he did not actually commit himself to there *being* any crackers. I tell you, wars have been started for less. Fortunately, I bumped into Joan Ruddock, a supreme peacemaker. What, I asked her, was the story behind the crackers? Well, it seems — she is as canny as Bruce Kent, so I'd not like to put it in direct quotes — there was a meeting and it was felt that they just could not come up with a dozen jokes that would not offend women, gays, blacks, pacifists or some other vital section of their constituency. So the best course was silence. Thus has this vital annual outlet of ideology and propaganda been entirely conceded to the enemy.

○

If CND can't laugh at its more preposterous side at least once a year, nuclear weapons will never be abolished. That's my view. It is not

OH GOD, THIS IS YOUR DEVOTED HANDMAIDEN MARGARET. I HUMBLY PETITION YOU TO PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER AND STOP THIS NONSENSE FROM THE BISHOPS OR YOU'LL BE IN TROUBLE I WARN YOU.... AMEN
Robin Wheeler

alone in its solemnity, however. Perhaps its three capital letters have finally gone to its head to make it like another national institution. In my last diary I told a joke, actually an old Scottish saying, that offended all men, all Catholics, all workers. Some women also found it offensive. Need I add that many people laughed? John Pilger, who has also just had a baby daughter, tried to quote it on *News Stand*, the Radio 4 Saturday morning review of the weekly press. But the BBC would not allow any reference to the Pontiff's testicles. Accordingly, these were deleted. Lord Reith would have approved of CND's attitude to Xmas crackers.

○

Sartre, always a favourite of mine, is on the go again, on stage and in publishing, and I'm glad the old boy has bounced back just as Father Time cuts a swathe through a further generation of illustrious French intellectuals. Indeed, I half expect Jean-Paul to start giving interviews again. (*Question*: You said that 'Hell is other people'; given your recent experience. . .) For me his greatest contribution was to show how people in all their glorious and revolting individuality could be comprehended in their specific class terms, without reductionism. I suppose he provided an antidote to the religiosity of individualism. The real influence of a writer, however, is the use to which his influence is put by others. And if Sartre can be discerned behind the composition of Ronnie Fraser's *In Search of a Past* this really is a recommendation. Many things can be said in praise of Fraser's book. One of the best is the scrupulous way he combines a cold and detailed dissection of Anglo-Saxon class relations — from gentry horse-worship to antagonisms between the servants, asking always about the precise questions of money — with a lively appreciation of feelings, confusions and sex. Another, if you know him, is the odd effect of meeting an old acquaintance after learning that he was tied to his potty.

○

And to bring yourself up to date on a somewhat different aspect of sex and class, send at least £2.00 (but make it more) to 44 South Road, Dodworth, Barnsley S75 3LQ, for a copy of *Women Against Pit Closures*.

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Wind and water

In his speech to the Tory conference, the party chairman, John Gummer, rejected the views of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, on the pit strike and the government's economic policies.

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a visibly leaking boat.
Though poor at sailing, by frequently bailing
They managed to keep afloat.
The Owl looked up, as they passed the pier,
And sang to his guiding star,
'O fearless Pussy! O Pussy, my dear,
What a Maggiefied Pussy you are!
You are,
You are!
What a Maggiefied Pussy you are!

Pussy said to the Owl, 'The weather is foul
And our vessel has started to lurch;
But victory springs from believing in things
And losing our faith in the Church.'
They dined on ham, and lashings of jam,
Which they ate with a Runcieble spoon;
And plank by plank, as their confidence sank,
They howled to the maddening moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They howled to the maddening moon.

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COSA NOSTRA MEANS BIG BUSINESS

Italian police are learning much about the mafia from the highest placed 'grass' ever to give information. Donald Sassoon looks at the way in which Cosa Nostra has become an integral — and extremely powerful — part of Italian business and politics

AP

Sao Paulo, October 1983: Don Masino is arrested on drug trafficking charges

When a hundred dogs fight over a bone, happy is the man who keeps out of it. *Old mafia saying*

TOMMASINO Buscetta ('Don Masino') has found an odd way to keep out of it: sitting in his super-protected cell, he has spent the last two months telling the Italian police everything he knows about the criminal organization of which he was a powerful representative: Cosa Nostra. (Don Masino refuses to use the term 'mafia'. He says it is a journalistic invention: 'We always call it Cosa Nostra'). He has done what no other *capomafioso* has ever had the courage to do: he has named names, revealed secrets.

What are his motives? It could be revenge: rival mafiosi have killed two of his six sons, a brother, his brother-in-law, a nephew. But Don Masino says that he is not seeking revenge, that he now believes in justice: 'Had I wanted to avenge what has been done to my family I would have done it myself in my own time and in my own way'.

A more likely explanation is that Buscetta is simply fighting one of the mafia's frequent civil wars, but that this time he has chosen a singular weapon which breaks all traditions: he has chosen to ally himself with the forces of law and order.

But Buscetta hints at another motive. He says that he is denouncing a new and ruthless mafia that abides by none of the traditional ethical norms which it once had. Buscetta genuinely believed in the mafia code and its traditions. The old mafia was a microcosm of society, an orderly system of laws and hierarchies, with an ethical dimension. In the last ten years all this has changed. The mafia of old has given way to a murderous business, based on managerial criteria of efficiency, market expansion, profit maximization. Buscetta's old world is crumbling.

Pino Arlacchi, one of the leading mafia experts, rightly warns us not to see the mafia with Buscetta's eyes. Even when Don Masino was a young killer, the world of the mafia was a cruel one: 'innocents' were killed; the lives of women and children were not respected. The mafia never had rigid moral codes, but mafiosi too, like everyone else, need their own ideology. They like to think of themselves not as simple gangsters, but as respected members of the 'honoured society'.

Buscetta has also described the internal structure of the mafia, confirming much of the analyses of Arlacchi and others. The mafia operates on the basis of two parallel structures: an American organization, which has the exclusive monopoly of all activities within the US, and a Sicilian mafia, which has a more multinational dimension. The headquarters of the Sicilian mafia are in Palermo, seat of the 'Board of Directors' or 'strategic command' — made up of no more than ten leaders, each of whom represents a number of families.

The basis of the family is a territory. Without it you cannot be a 'capo'. To possess territory means to have power, to control men, families and an entire network of common interests. The mafia can be compared to a chessboard of integrated territories based on families, a loose confederation of inter-familial relationships. In each family the 'soldiers' are known as 'men of honour'. At the top there is the *capofamiglia* who exercises his power with one or more *consiglieri*. Over the families there is the commission and the *capocommissione*. Finally there is an 'interprovincial commission' which is supposed to arbitrate in case of inter-family conflicts.

There is thus no real integrated command structure. Decisions regarding operations must be reached by agreement between different families. Alongside this network there is a variety of people who are not 'card-carrying men of honour', but are connected in some way, usually economic, to a family. The resulting network is complex and it is extremely difficult from the outside to distinguish who is and who is not a real mafia 'member'.

THE TRANSFORMATION of the mafia into a multinational company is a relatively recent phenomenon. In the early '70s the leading mafia families abandoned some of their traditional activities, solved their internal differences and entered into the heroin trade in a big way. Before 1970 the mafia was mainly connected to real estate speculation, linked with political corruption, citrus fruit rackets, control over water supplies, tobacco smuggling and protection rackets. Since the war it had penetrated local government and established political links with the governing political parties and in particular with the Christian Democrats (DC).

The 'new' mafia is made up mainly of the younger relatives of the old mafia, which had reinserted itself into the social fabric of Sicilian society during the Second World War, thanks to US help. The new mafia is managerial and entrepreneurial. It operates companies, banks and computers. They are not, as they used to be before 1945, the servants of the landlord. They are no longer the handmaidens of politicians (as was the case in the '50s and '60s). They are now strong enough to exercise political power directly and to have their own men in the top echelons of politics and commerce.

The mafia is now active in five main sectors: it purchases morphine in the Middle East, refines it in Sicily, exports it to the US, then launders and recycles the revenues and, finally, invests

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them in legal and illegal activities. The enormous increase in the rate of profit (the yearly world turnover is in the region of $1,000 million) has meant that the mafia has had to expand constantly.

ACCORDING to the official statistics the inhabitants of Palermo earn 40 per cent less than the average Italian. This puts the city in the 70th place of the earnings league of Italian cities: yet it is in the top ten when it comes to consumption.

The officially designated 'second mafia' town of Trapani is among the poorest cities in Italy: it has no drinking water and a primitive sewage system. Real estate speculation has destroyed the ecological connection between the surrounding mountains and the sea: natural drainage has been eliminated and, when it rains, the city is flooded. Yet luxury cars, boutiques with expensive clothes, fur coats and jewellers are everywhere. The mafia economy is a distorted image of 'normal' capitalist inequality. But a lot of jobs and a lot of money depend on the mafia. The consent it enjoys in much of Sicilian society is due not only to fear, but also to economic interest.

'The mafia is not an antiquated piece of Sicilian folklore, destined to disappear before the triumphant march of progress and modernity. . .it has thrived in the shadows of the developing modern Italian state'

It has become increasingly clear, in recent years, that the most fruitful way to tackle the mafia is to identify its links with finance and banking. The best evidence of this is that so many of those who have investigated the mafia's banking operations, or who have fought for greater access to bank secrets, have been eliminated: in 1979 Mario Francese, an investigative journalist; Boris Guiliano, Chief of Police of Palermo; Michele Reina, a local DC politician; and Cesare Terranova, left-wing MP and anti-mafia expert were all killed. In 1980 it was the turn of Piersanti Mattarella, President of the Sicilian Regional Council; Emanuele Basile, captain of the carabinieri; and Gaetano Costa, investigative judge. In 1982 the mafia aimed even higher. It killed Pio La Torre, member of the Communist Party National Executive and party regional secretary for Sicily, and General Carlo Alberto Della Chiesa, the Prefect of Palermo appointed to wage war on the mafia.

In the last few years the Italian police have successfully shut down some major morphine refineries in Sicily. As a result the mafia spread to South America and the cocaine trade (through Buscetta). There is now a massive restructuring of international illegal markets. The mafia is gradually abandoning its control over the production cycle, which transforms morphine into heroin. This is being handed over to 'native' criminal elements in Thailand, the Lebanon and elsewhere. The Sicilians keep

AP

Foreign Minister Andreotti: Italy's most powerful politician

for themselves the cream of the business, namely financial brokerage of international trade — from the production markets to the consumption markets.

The mafia seeks to dominate these markets in exactly the same way as a normal capitalist enterprise does once it has detected strong market trends. All international illegal markets intersect at particular points. For example, the connection between the arms and the drug trade is extremely close in the Middle East.

In its multinational dimension the mafia can transcend the nation state and its law enforcement agencies (just as multinational companies can escape national taxation). Those analyses of the mafia which seek to reduce it to a phenomenon of 'underdevelopment' and backwardness are thus mistaken. The mafia is not an antiquated piece of Sicilian folklore, destined to disappear before the triumphant march of progress and modernity.

The roots of the mafia are in the past, but it has thrived in the shadows of the developing modern Italian state. In most cases the initial capital outlay to finance mafia operations originate from the public sector. This is the indirect result of the vast sums earmarked for Sicily by successive Christian Democratic governments in an effort to underpin their electoral base.

Many of these sums have remained unspent in southern banks, thus providing liquid capital which could be injected into the circulation network of the mafia economy. Thus the growth of the mafia is organically connected with the particular brand of interventionism of the recent Christian Democratic regimes.

What Buscetta has not revealed is the full extent of direct involvement of senior Christian Democratic politicians with the mafia — the so-called 'Third Level'. His revelations seem to have gone no further than the ex-mayor of Palermo, Vito Ciancimino, whose mafia links have frequently been exposed in the press, and whose protector was once Amintore Fanfani, several times Prime Minister and President of the Senate.

Many of the other local DC bosses linked to the mafia, such as Salvatore Lima, another former mayor of Palermo and member of the Italian and European Parliaments, are very close to the present Foreign Secretary, Giulio Andreotti, arguably the most powerful politician in Italy. Andreotti's connections with Sindona have led to the Italian Communist Party to demand his resignation. □

AFRICA

TERMS OF THE LOAN ARE AS FOLLOWS. . .

Strings attached to US aid are becoming increasingly blatant, reports David Ward

OVERSHADOWED by the multi-billion dollar debtors of Latin America, the poverty ridden countries of Sub-Saharan Africa are also facing the imminent prospect of financial strangulation. The less publicised African debt crisis is adding still further to the burden of a continent already devastated by widespread drought and famine. And the price the African governments are having to pay for their debts is internal political interference — notably from the US — unprecedented since the end of colonial rule.

In contrast to the likes of Brazil or Mexico, Africa's financial woes cause no tremours within the Western banking system. Aside from the special case of Nigeria, the majority of nations in Sub-Saharan Africa are so poor that they never gained a credit rating with the commercial banks and were denied access to the lending boom enjoyed by the wealthier Latin Americans in the mid-1970s. As a result Africa has accumulated debt burdens which are too small to threaten the profit levels of our high street banks. Last year the low-income African countries owned the relatively 'small' amount of $22,600 million in medium and long term debt. Coping with repayments, however, requires the African nations to impose austerity measures at least as severe as in Latin America.

Since Sub-Saharan Africa lacks the clout even to threaten to organise a debtors-cartel or repudiate their loans (mostly owed to governments rather than commercial sources), the region is being forced to rely on the sharply curtailed largesse of the official Western aid donors. As a consequence African governments are having to bow to internal political interference.

Last month, prior to its annual meeting in Washington, the World Bank (the largest and most influential intergovernmental development agency) published a report* to highlight the deepening spiral of poverty, famine and debt that threatens to engulf the continent. The Bank proposed a special fund to provide an additional $2 billion annually in aid for the region. Predictably the administration of President Ronald Reagan expressed extreme reluctance to provide any conbtribution to the resources requested.

THE BANK'S reports pulls no punches. It warns that on pessimistic growth assumptions over the next decade 'real African income in 1995 will be so low that between 65 per cent and 80 per cent of the people will be living below the poverty line'. Tracing the stark combination of drought (the worst for 15 years), population growth (rising more rapidly than anywhere else

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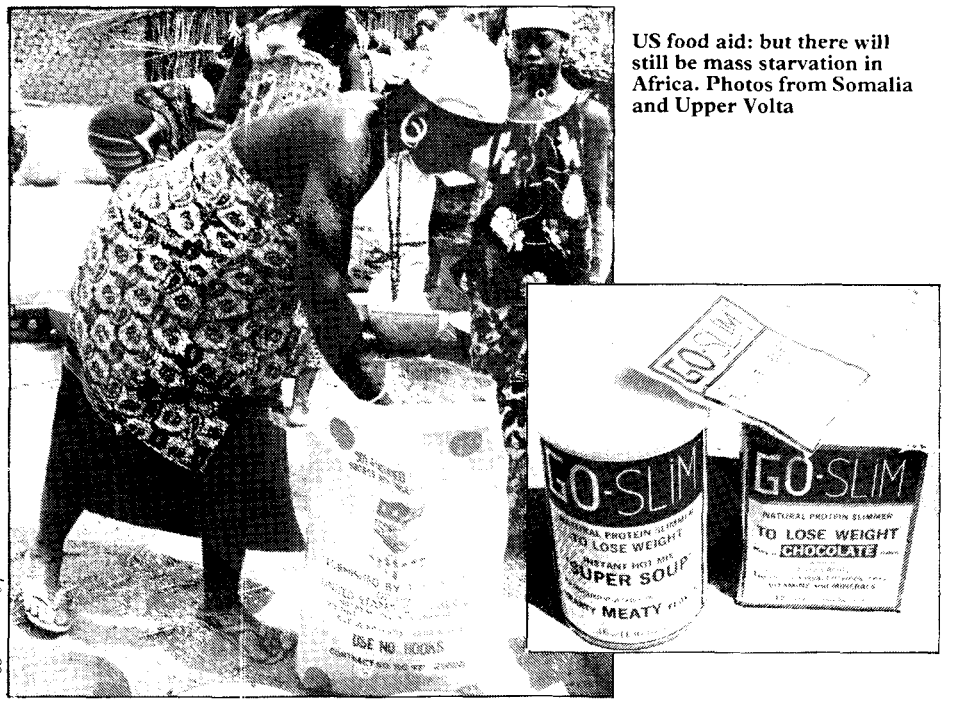

Maggie Murray/Format

US food aid: but there will still be mass starvation in Africa. Photos from Somalia and Upper Volta

in the world), and the effect of the international recession (forcing primary commodities to the lowest price levels for three decades), the Bank stresses the impact of Africa's accelerating decline in per capita incomes.

For the region as a whole, says the report, 'per capita output in 1983 was 11 per cent below the 1980 level, more than offsetting all of the very modest gains of the 1970s' (see table). Meanwhile Africa's debt crisis is forcing further contraction as governments accept severe austerity measures administered by the International Monetary Fund. About half of the total world debt reschedulings between 1975 and 1983 were by African countries reflecting their acute financial difficulties.

According to the Bank's report, without special action annual capital flows to the region will decline from about $11 billion to $5 billion over the period 1985-97; hence the call for a special fund. It is argued that substantial new resources will be required in order to persuade African governments to carry out painful policy changes aimed at improving agricultural production and halting the decline in per capita output.

To ease the burden of economic adjustment the Bank has offered so-called Structural Adjustment Loans which offer funds to assist policy reform at the macro-economic level rather than the traditional project based lending. This new form of lending has fuelled criticism that the Bank is encroaching on the territory of the IMF through the adoption of harsh loan conditions and policy reform. The Bank's concern for policy 'guidance' looks tame, however, when compared with the hardline ideological strings being attached to official assistance from the United States.

IN RESPONSE to Africa's plight, the Reagan Administration has launched the so-called Economic Policy Initiative (EPI). The US is offering $500 million to African governments over the next five years in order to gain 'reform leverage'. The EPI aims to encourage African countries to redirect their economies on capitalist lines. 'The whole initiative' say US officials 'is based on the incentive principle' and stresses the dismantling of the public sector 'for transfer to the private sector or back to village agriculture'.

Rather than financing the World Bank's new African fund, President Reagan is favouring bilateral assistance like the EPI which is unfettered by the need for inter-governmental compromise and consensus. The White House is deeply sceptical of all the official multilateral agencies and regards even the World Bank as a proto-socialist institution. Indeed the Republicans' pre-election foreign policy manifesto condemns the Bank for its 'predilection for nations with state dominated economic systems'.

Emphasising Reagan's bizarre attitude towards the World Bank is the financing crisis afflicting the International Development Association (IDA), the Bank's soft-loan agency which provides concessional 50 year loans with minimal interest to low income Third World countries. The IDA is replenished every three years and for the next term (due to have started this July) the Bank asked for $16 billion from the mainly Western donors. The figure proposed aimed to just maintain the previous level of loan committments. But the White House rejected this amount and insisted on reducing the US contribution. As a result the agreed total for IDA is a mere $9 billion (other donor contributions being fixed to the US level of support).

For the African countries the meagre replenishment of the IDA is disastrous. Over the next three years they will face a 21 per cent reduction in IDA finance exactly at the moment the region requires urgent increases not decreases in concessional aid. The alternative for Sub-Saharan Africa will be further reliance on ideologically motivated bilateral aid as promoted by the US and President Reagan. The Republicans quaintly describe it as 'building the infrastructure of democratic capitalism'. □

* *Toward Sustained Development — A Joint Programme of Action For Sub-Saharan Africa*, The World Bank, Washington DC.

POLAND

DIALOGUE ACROSS THE 'IRON CURTAIN'

Rachel Adam finds that the position of the Polish grass-roots movement is changing

THERE WAS a joke current in Poland last winter: 'What happens when a Pershing hits Poznan (the potato growing region)? Answer: Fried chips all over Poland'. Cynical jokes also greeted a showing of the American TV film *The Day After*. 'You have to understand', a friend told me, 'anyone who lived through the '40s and '50s in Poland is not going to be frightened by *The Day After*. We had a joke in those days too: "Truman please drop it, we can't stand it any longer".'

Polish people do not crack jokes about the nuclear threat because they are indifferent to it. On the contrary, as Janusz Onyszkiewicz, the Warsaw press spokesperson for Solidarity, wrote to the last European Disarmament Convention: 'For us Poles the matter of peace is extremely important . . . few have reason to know better than we what total war means.'

There is of course a difference between preventing war (which might have broken out had the Soviet Union sent tanks into Poland) and stopping the deployment of nuclear weapons. The Western European peace movement has concentrated on the latter and a crucial part of its strategy has been to try to forge links, of people and organisations, across the East/West divide.

That would demonstrate that the antagonism of the two superpower blocs was not based on popular demand; and that the military and economic drive in the arms race was more more to do with governments controlling their own societies than with preparing to fend off a real, outside aggressor. Yet for many Poles, this view has, until recently, seemed naive, one-sided and excessively suspicious of the military. With a history of outside invasion, both Church and Army in Poland have appeared as defenders of native civil rights.

Some voices in Poland's underground press have raised the issue. A leaflet from Krakow, 13 June 1982, stated: 'We demand the destruction of nuclear aresenals, begin US-USSR talks now! We protest the state of war' (martial law in Polish means, literally, a state of war). A leaflet from Solidarity in Lodz, 31 August 1983, called for: 'The withdrawal and no installation of rockets with nuclear missiles in the territory of Poland and Europe.' Initially, these were isolated gestures.

IN THE LAST year, there has been a significant change. A number of documents and appeals from various sections of Polish society on the subject of peace have appeared. In May 1983, the Warsaw KOS (one of the Committees for Social Resistance) took the unprecedented step of writing to the Western peace movement. They declared their respect for the Western peace movement and their concern that it was

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being exploited by Eastern bloc propaganda. They asked for a 'jointly worked out programme of demands which take into account the realities of the systems in which the nations subjected to the USSR live.' In an accompanying Declaration, they did dismiss the 'hysterial propaganda on the NATO military threat' which was 'being spread in communist countries.'

Fourteen months later, the joint statement they called for had been worked out by KOS in Warsaw, Lega Ambiente in Rome and Codene in France. The text stated 'It is unthinkable today to ask anyone to give up the struggle for liberation from political oppression or from the atomic theatre' and that 'the pacifist movements will go on fighting against the atomic order which is today threatening democracy instead of defending it.'

While earlier statements from Poland appeared to demand that Western peace movements relinquish their own demands in favour of the struggle against totalitarianism, the July 1984 joint statement brings together both Polish and Western political priorities. 'Peace and freedom are indivisible' the new declaration states. It goes on to map out clearly its objectives under both headings.

It wants the formation of a European movement 'from below' that commits itself to seeing 'that all European peoples are guaranteed their democratic rights, denouncing every limitation of human rights and every persecution of ideas wherever it is carried out in the East as well as the West.' It must also 'stop the insane escalation (of arms) which makes Europe a possible stage for a nuclear war.'

PRACTICAL objectives for all the groups are specified, including the reduction of military expenditure and militarist propaganda. 'Our objective is a united Europe, free from blocs, free from political and economic conditioning by superpowers, free from foreign military presence.'

'We feel we have gone as far as we can' M., a representative from KOS, told me. 'This is the only kind of statement that Polish society could support. It is up to the Western peace movements now to support us, to consider in detail the relationship between freedom and peace. A lot depends on whether they are strong enough to bridge the gap communist propaganda is trying to stretch.'

'What got you involved in the issue?' I asked. 'I was really worried that we were getting self-enclosed, self-centered' said M. 'It was obvious to me that the peace issue was extremely important and that Poland could be the beginning of a new war. Nobody seemed to see this at the time. People are very Polocentric. We also suspected that the peace movement in the West was very similar to Solidarity, a grass roots movement. We hope to find a common language. So far we seem to have been successful.'

Janusz Onyszkiewicz from Solidarity agreed there had been a change, that the gap between them and the Western peace movement was narrowing. Nonetheless, he still felt that Solidarity had to stay out of foreign policy issues, as it had decided to in its legal period, for he still hoped for some sort of compromise with the authorities.

The gap is narrowing — but Solidarity is still

Chris Schwarz

An 'official' dove of peace in Lublin, Poland

critical, especially on questions of military balance, unilateralism and the attaching of 'equal blame' to both Superpowers. 'Westerners say "you're abused, we're abused, it's basically the same"; it's not' said Onyszkiewicz. Personally he favoured 'mutual de-escalation of nuclear arms starting from a position of balance.' If this sounds rather Reaganite, M, from a different political position, said 'We find your anti-Reagan stance one-sided and mechanical. We don't like his jokes or his playing with weapons but his stand on eocnomic sanctions helped to obtain the last amnesty — as did the work of the Church and the Underground.'

He understands the feeling. 'Our tendency to blame the Russians for everything is similar. We should also try to free ourselves from prejudice and see if there isn't anything genuine there after all. The root of the problem is the existence of two Superpowers, which is why we want a united Europe that could be a third voice on policy, independent, taking a strong stand.' He likened both Superpowers to 'two young, stupid big boys with a lot of power they don't know what to do with' — but saw little comparison between their degrees of oppression.

If the initiative for a change of view came from KOS, others have joined in. In February this year a new group in Wroclaw calling itself Ranks for Peace and Solidarity published a series of specifically anti- militarist demands in an underground publication called *Fighting Solidarity*. They included the removal of all atomic weapons from Polish territory and the return of Soviet soldiers to ther homeland.

Their founding statement said that nuclear missiles were being secretly deployed on Polish territory thus drawing them into international conflict. Their primary aim was to 'initiate a general peace movement in Poland with the perspective of creating similar movements in other Eastern European countries.' In May this year KOS announced its meeting with and active support for the Ranks.

While these initiatives quite clearly stressed the connection between peace and human rights, another group has reaised its voice on the issue of nuclear weapons alone. In December 1983 a group of well-known activists from various autonomous trade unions sent an appeal to the Sejm (parliament) asking it to reconsider the Rapacki plan. This was the plan put forward by Adam Rapacki, Foreign Minister and member of the Politbureau in the 1950s, for central Europe to be a nuclear-free zone between the Superpowers.

Andrej Malanowski, a professor in industrial law at Warsaw University, explained that they had deliberately chosen to have a limited concrete goal, first put forward by a high-ranking Communits Party member. It was important to stress the dangers of all nuclear weapons. 'We don't think it's important who started it. I don't understand people who only demonstrate against cruise and Pershing missiles, he said. 'It's also important to understand the economic and social burden armaments create. People can survive without much freedom; without bread and freedom, it's impossible.' There had been no official response to their appeal — but last February two official newspaper articles discussed the Rapacki plan and Malanowski knew it had stimulated discussion in the parliamentary foreign commission.

For young people, the activity of independent activists in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany has also stimulated discussion. At Warsaw University a small group of students has begun to discuss the possibility of an independent peace group. 'We feel that the peace problem is the main problem now'. He thought the government was too busy with the Underground to suppress them. The students reflect a growing need to do something visible. 'How long can people go on gathering in churches and signing patriotic songs?' a friend asked me. 'It's getting boring, it's a dead end. If I were an activist, I'd be a peace activist.'

It seems likely that the Polish authorities will watch these developments closely. In November 1983 the Polish military newspaper *Zolnierz Wolnosci* denounced co-operation between Solidarity and the Western peace movement as a ploy of the 'revanchist revisionist forces in West Germany' and US militarism. □

Several quotations from published material are taken from Poland Watch, *Washington DC.*

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LETTERS

The broad politics of art

John Spurling, c/o New Statesman

Mr Turvey (Letters 5 October) is quite right to take issue with my reviewing practice. Our 'locations' are miles apart, though I wouldn't claim, as he does of mine, that his doesn't exist. People who brandish the word 'commitment' are seldom prepared to recognise the commitments of others. Mine is, as I hope my reviews constantly imply, to artists and their work. It cannot be given to 'a principled set of propositions' because the propositions are stated afresh each time by the artists and to elevate criticism, theory or ideology above the makers of the thing being discussed is to wag the dog with the tail.

What is Mr Turvey committed to? He doesn't specify, but it's clear that he regards the business of putting art on the walls — its sponsorship, its patronage, its market value — as more interesting than the thing itself. Of course it can be interesting (I quite often refer to it in my reviews), but I can't agree that it should constitute the primary purpose of a review. Nor is the primary purpose simply reaction, but action and reaction, in other words dialogue, give and take, shared enthusiasm. When I enjoy something I want both to analyse my own enjoyment and to persuade others to go and enjoy it for themselves. The fact that a sponsor has temporarily attached his name to it or that a dealer is making a profit out of it is quite irrelevant except insofar as it has helped make the enjoyment public.

Does Mr Turvey enjoy art? If not, why does he bother with it? If political commitment is what he thinks most important, art is a most imperfect vehicle for it. Certainly it may have a political dimension, as it may have many others — being simply a reflection of human life from whatever aspect the artist chooses — but to say that the political dimension encloses the art is like saying that the engine encloses the car. It is perhaps a tenable thesis that all art is political in the broadest sense — the nature of the car is dictated by its history, period and environment — but to demand that all discussion of art should be politically committed is ideological imperialism.

Incidentally, Mr Turvey might like to know that the Tate is hoping to organise a public forum on sponsorship in the New Year.

No bones about it

Peter Veale, London N10

It was interesting to read, in the piece by your anonymous Conservative activist (*NS* 5 October), that within the Tory movement there is a group which 'makes no bones about its stance on issues like sex, legalisation of heroin, homosexuality and prostitution — it supports them all'.

While not pretending to know exactly what this means (sex, surely, is here to stay with or without their support), I interpret the stance as yet another fashionable cave-in to the permissives. So we old-fashioned supporters of the Labour Party who still broadly subscribe to conventional morality — there are a lot of us about — may yet live to see the Tories exposed as the true party of decadence, which I happen to think they are.

Perhaps it is time the Labour Party started injecting some healthy puritanism into its thinking instead of giving — or appearing to give — aid and comfort to loony and nasty causes. Our leaders might be surprised at the votes they would get back by standing up for a moral code which goes beyond condemnation of nuclear arms.

Work hazards appeal

John Bradbrook, British Society for Social Responsibility in Science

The new report by Joan Smith (*NS* 7 September) on the asbestos libel case and its consequences for Russell Press, though entirely accurate, gave only part of the story.

The shoestring finances of a publishing operation, which relied on unpaid writers and long hours of unpaid labour, yet which has provided a unique coverage of health and safety issues, were broken by the costs (expected to exceed £25,000) of defending *Asbestos Killer Dust* against the High Court action. Alan Dalton and the BSSRS Work Hazards Group (which produces the excellent Hazards Bulletin) are if anything in a worse financial situation than Russell Press.

If you value the work that BSSRS has been doing in recent years on such issues as asbestos, noise, vibration and toxic chemicals, then please contribute something to enable us to keep our campaigning work going. Please send all donations, however small, to the Work Hazards Appeal Fund, c/o London Hazards Centre, 103 Borough Road, London SE1.

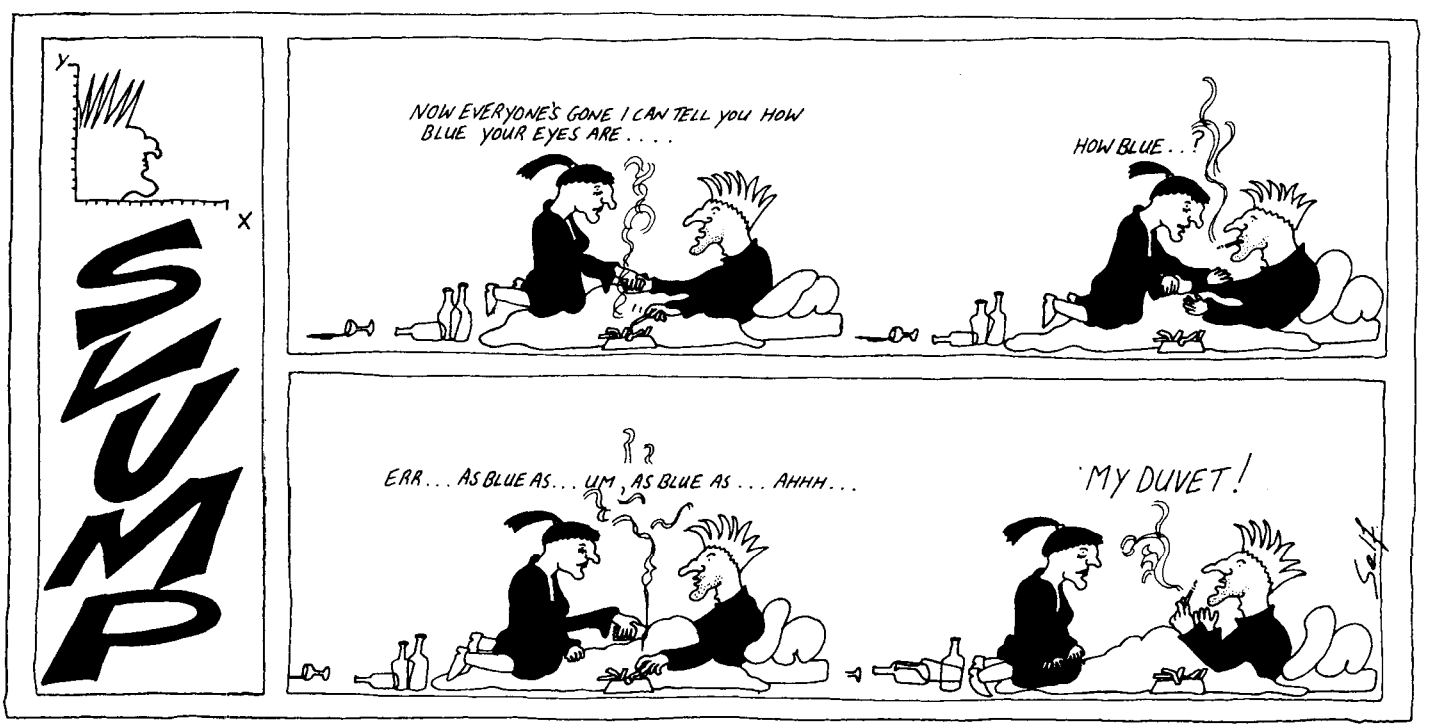
Neighbourhood policing

Richard Clifton, Chair, Fontaine Area Neighbourhood Watch Association, London SW16

In your article on Neighbourhood Watch schemes (*NS* 21 September) you quote me as saying 'I felt we were being offered a little bit of democratic input into policing practice. But the police are unwilling to discuss even minor details of operational criteria.'

I said no such thing. I can recall no operational aspect of policing in this area that the police have been unwilling to discuss with our Neighbourhood Watch scheme, and the issues we have discussed have ranged from the instructions given to police about stopping and searching young people to the impact of policing the miners' strike on their effectiveness locally. What I did say was that Scotland Yard seems strangely reluctant to discuss with those involved in NW schemes policy issues relating to the objectives, organisation, activities and development of the schemes, this conflicting with the extent to which the schemes have, locally, been genuine police-community exterprises.

Most of the problems described by Christian Wolmar (lack of sensitivity to existing community groups and community problems, potentially divisive activities such as patrolling estates etc) could in my view be overcome by the development of better guidance and a code of practice, preferably by those involved in the schemes in collective discussion with the police, leaving us ▷



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with some very real benefits in better police-community relations. Christian Wolmar correctly records that my efforts to interest the police in such a development have not met with success.

Prison violence

Terry O'Halloran, c/o New Statesman

I write in reply to the letter from Mr David Walburn (*NS* 28 September) concerning my report on conditions in Wandsworth prison (*NS* 14 September). Mr Walburn's letter is a classic example of why prisoners have no faith in the alleged 'independence' of Boards of Visitors.

On the main allegations Mr Walburn first claims to have 'found no evidence of any of the alleged assaults'. He then says he will order an investigation. He then says that the 'bulk' of the allegations are 'fantastic'. Finally, he says that one of the alleged assaults is already being investigated. This mish-mash of conflicting claims can hardly be expected to encourage prisoners to come to the Board of Visitors for assistance. Even more discouraging is the fact that Mr Walburn, as Chairman of the Board, feels free to describe the allegations as 'fantastic' in advance of his investigation. What kind of investigation is this?

Mr Walburn also displays a penchant for Home Office officialese with his remarks about 'violent incidents', 'caring for mentally ill prisoners' etc. The issue at stake is violence by prison staff against prisoners. Mr Walburn should not try to obscure this by generalised talk about violence.

He accuses me of not taking up an invitation to visit Wandsworth segregation unit. His account is less than complete. I told him that I would take up the invitation as soon as I obtained from the Home Office the answers to questions first asked on 9 August. I got the answers on 25 September and immediately passed on Mr Walburn's invitation. I made clear to the Home Office my willingness to visit the segregation unit whenever it could be arranged. I have heard nothing since then.

As for sensationalism, it is interesting that headlines such as 'Killers on the roof' (*Standard* reporting on the Albany roof top protest May 1983) are not considered sensationalist. Any exposure of the real conditions inside British prisons is automatically labelled as sensationalist.

Many prisoners regard Boards of Visitors as lapdogs for the Home Office rather than watchdogs for prisoners. Mr Walburn's letter will have strengthened this conviction.

Robben Island

Benny Bunsee, Editor, IKWEZI, Nottingham

Your reviewer's remarks on *Robben Island, Hell-Hole'* (*NS* 28 September) do great disservice to an authentic and excellent account of the horrendous prison conditions there by its former inmate-author, Moses Dlamini. He has written in a totally non-sectarian way a human account that has not only made a deep impact on whoever has read it but which has also been favourably compared to Dostoevsky's *The House of the Dead*, also a prison account.

His book was dedicated to *all* political prisoners in the country and to Sobukwe — to the latter as he was one of its first inmates, and a special law known as the Sobukwe law had to be passed to retain him on Robben Island and keep him totally isolated from all other political prisoners.

Under no circumstances can it be said that Moses wrote from the point of view of any political party — least of all that of the PAC of which he is a member. Nor can the particular incident he cited be in any way constructed as casting aspersions on the ANC. On Robben Island all political prisoners worked together simply because there was no time for the luxury of divisions. One wonders if the reviewer had actually read the book, or decided rather to scribble a few lines of derogation of what he mistook for a PAC manifesto.

FEEDBACK

God and Marx hand in hand

I SHOULD LIKE to express my very real regret and surprise at the contents of Michèle Roberts's recent 'Weekend' article in the *NS* (28 September). As a Catholic and a socialist I found the tone of her contribution respectively blasphemous and irrelevant: as a reasonable ecclesiastical historian and doctrinal scholar I was amused by its innaccuracies and generalisations.

This apart, I think that the *New Statesman* might do well to consider that far from being solely founded on humanist principles, the British labour movement has always had in addition a strong tradition of Christian socialism and considerable support particularly from working-class Catholics. Reference to the Christian Eucharist as 'holy cookery demonstrations' and to the Assumption of Our Lady as her 'whizzing up' are hardly likely to encourage a feeling of solidarity between Christian and non-Christian socialists, quite apart from their being unnecessary in themselves.

Michèle Roberts's article raises a number of issues which, of course, need to be answered by anybody claiming to be both a Christian and a socialist, although perhaps the most distressing aspect of her article was the tacit assumption that such a position is untenable. Without a long theological and economic work-out, it would perhaps be difficult to explain how one can be said — for some of our comrades, anyway — to flow from the other.

I think, however, that two points should be emphasised very firmly. The first is that Christian commitment to the poor and underprivileged is not some airy-fairy nonsense about fobbing them off with being God's special people so that we, the nasty priests and theologians, can make money out of them. Were lapsed Catholics who have 'exchanged God for Marx' to look again at their Catechisms they would find that this transaction was in fact unnecessary: oppression of the poor and defrauding labourers of their wages (the emphasis on fraud can be taken to indicate, in Marxist terms, the alienation of the worker from the surplus value he creates) are two of the sins crying out to heaven for vengeance. Marx and God can co-operate, just.

Secondly (and now I can almost hear the snorts of derision, so powerful are the modern myths about the history of the Church), Christianity so far from being an oppressor of women has in the main been a liberating force. At a time when on the whole women got a pretty rough deal spiritually, St Paul urged that 'in Christ there is neither male nor female' and the reason he tells women to cover their heads while worshipping is almost certainly from a desire to preserve the *femininity* of the character of their salvation — the gnostic heretics seem to have taught that women become spiritual men when near to God and it is this belief which Paul wants to counterpart with the retention of a gesture which was deeply part of women's culture in the first century.

Again, it was Christianity which urged that a woman had rights within marriage and should demand and expect from her husband the same sexual fidelity required of her by secular society — and this during the hated Patristic period when the influence of stoic ideas had, it is true, led to a rather warped view of human sexuality and the place of women in the writings of some Christian writers. During the great times of monasticism, women held extremely high office in the Church — for example, in Celtic Christianity, having authority as abbesses over bishops in some cases.

All this cannot merely be swept away with an appeal to the subconscious power of some Catholic imagery, even when produced in a mysteriously worded article in the *New Statesman*. The reasons for this are obvious — that in the end Catholic imagery is historically rooted. Whatever Ms Roberts may think, if Mary Magdalen existed at all she was a repented whore. And Ms Roberts may regret the fact, or not believe it, but the reason we contemplate Christ's precious blood and not menstrual discharge is because the former is redemptive while the latter is not. To suggest that there is anything more to it than that is merely sloppy thinking.

Christopher Danes

Christopher Danes is a member of Sherborne (Dorset) Labour Party and teaches at Sherborne School.

Tales from Teignmouth

Gerald Taylor, Chairman, Teignbridge Constituency Labour Party, Teignmouth, Devon

I was interested to find in your 'This England' column (*NS* 21 September) a report from the *Sunday Mirror* concerning a meeting in Teignmouth where Young Socialists collected for striking miners' families, Young Conservatives collected for working miners and Young Liberals collected for pit ponies. You may be interested to know the results of these collections.

The Young Liberals collected £5 plus for pit ponies (who frankly deserve more), the Young Conservatives collected £15 for working miners and Teignbridge Young Socialists over £30 for the families of striking miners in the Deep Navigation colliery, Treharris. (This money is in addition to the many hundreds of pounds collected throughout Teignbridge by the local Miners' Families Support Group.)

This was achieved in a town whose council is almost entirely Conservative, with the exception of one Liberal and two Independents, and was chiefly due to the work of the Young Socialists who were excellent in presenting the miners' case in a 'political discussion' with the Tory, Liberal and SDP youth groups before the collections.

It is a great pity that in a town like Teignmouth, where such political discussion is hardly the norm, that more were not there to see it.

Wrong century

Stephen Williams, London SE6

While the Marx family undoubtedly possessed extraordinary abilities, the suggestion by Christopher Price (*NS* 5 October) that Eleanor wrote the GMWU constitution in 1924 does seem unlikely considering she died in 1898.

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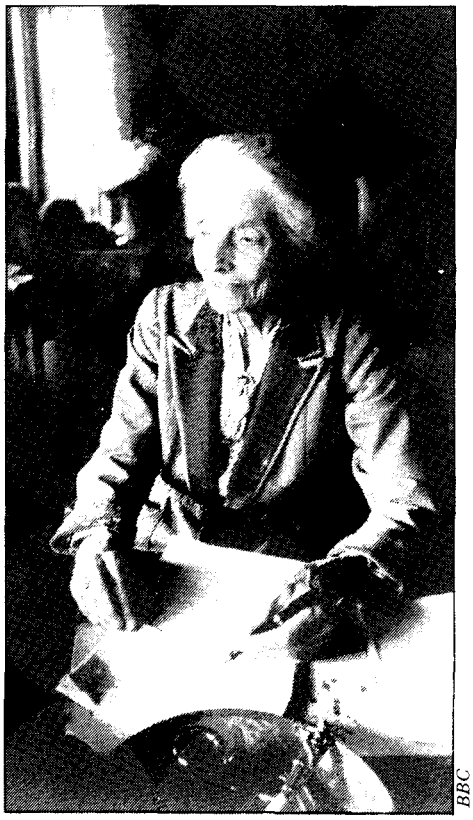
Like a mocking laugh at a funeral



BBC

Beatrice Webb in 1941 when she was 83

BEATRICE WEBB's name is best known now as the inseparable half of the Webb partnership, as she described her marriage with Sidney Webb. Between them they created an enormous opus of highly influential empirical studies on labour and local government and set up a series of socialist and research institutions which have survived to this day. As a consequence perhaps, her name is also linked to Virginia Woolf's, as the obverse of the younger woman's highly imaginative and creative work. Yet through her diaries, the third volume of which is published on 18 October by Virago, an infinitely more complex woman is revealed. She supported the declaration of war on Germany by Britain — but becomes steadily more depressed by its reality; from her upper-middle-class heights she views the labour movement with disdain while her commitment to socialism remains unshaken. She is appalled by the angry young men of the Guild Socialists, who believed in producers' co-operatives rather than nationalisation, to be achieved by syndicalism and a general strike, but has a grudging admiration for the intellectual powers of their most notable spokesman, G.D.H. Cole. By 1913, one of the institutions established by the Webbs — the London School of Economics — had gained a sturdy independence while two more — the Fabian Society and Fabian Research Department (now the Labour Research Department) were undergoing stormy assault from the syndicalists. We begin the first of two extracts with the founding of their last, equally enduring, institution. . .*

25 May 1913

I find it increasingly difficult to find time or energy to write in my diary. The *New Statesman* absorbs both. We started with 2,450 postal subscribers. How many of these we shall keep depends on the uniqueness of the paper. There are all sorts of conflicting criticism. The paper is dull: it is mere brilliant writing and there is not enough solid information; the political articles are good but the literature 'rot'; the literary side is excellent, but the political articles not sufficiently constructive.

Our main difficulty is with Bernard Shaw — a difficulty which he always knew would arise in one way or another. He won't write over his own signature and some of the articles and notes that he sends are hopelessly out of keeping with our tone and our methods. And in order to threaten us, he writes signed letters to the *Nation*, Massingham (editor of the weekly *Nation*) of course trying to capture him from us. However, we have just to go on making the paper valuable. Sharp [first editor of the *New Statesman*] is turning out a good man of business, a safe though not distinguished writer. What he lacks is personal magnetism; in some ways he is too doggedly sincere.

The British workman has been persuaded by the propaganda of the I.L.P. that a Labour Party is useful. . .but the closer the Labour member sticks to the Liberal Party the better he is pleased. So far as he has any politics he still believes in the right of the middle and professional class to do the work of government. He does not believe his own mates are capable of it, and roughly speaking he is right. The landslide in England towards social democracy proceeds steadily, but it is the whole nation that is sliding, not the one class of manual workers.

18 February 1914

The middle and working-class socialists are in a quandary. They are hopelessly outnumbered within the Labour Party, and whenever they protest they are voted down. They have pledged themselves to working-class representation as part of the process of making the manual labourer conscious of his disinherited condition, and of arousing, in the working class, faith in the class struggle. But they are, by their adhesion to the present parliamentary party, bolstering up a fraud, pretending to the outside world that these respectable but reactionary trade union officials are the leaders of the social revolution. Moreover, by belonging to the Labour Party they are, to some extent, hampered in the old Fabian policy of the permeation of all parties, this policy demanding that socialists should be free to work inside all social sets and political parties. But to go back on the creation of a Labour Party would be to admit failure.

THE FABIAN Research Department, set up by Beatrice in 1912, held its conference in July 1914 at Barrow. The young syndicalists from Oxford University, with G.D.H. Cole and William Mellor, were proselytising their own Guild Socialist view of the control of industry.

31 July 1914

The atmosphere remained hostile to the management, and the eight Oxford boys, with Cole and Mellor, sat at a separate table, drank copiously and defiantly of the beer they ordered in, hoisted the Red Flag in front of the house and brought the police inspector to remonstrate with us for the uproarious singing of revolutionary songs at the station and in the market place, at the exact time when the great Keswick Evangelical Convention was arriving for the week of Religious Experiences. At our daily discussions they sat in a corner of the room, a solid Guild Socialist phalanx, and walked out of the room when any of their number were called to order; refused in the intervals between the meetings to speak to

**The Diary of Beatrice Webb Vol Three 1905-1924*, 'The Power to Alter Things'; edited by Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie, Virago Press, £20 hardback.

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any one but each other, and generally misbehaved themselves.

The War

5 August 1914

. . .There is no enthusiasm about the war: at present it is, on the part of England, a passionless war, a terrible nightmare sweeping over all classes, no one able to realize how the disaster came about. . .The best result would be that every nation should be soundly beaten and no one victorious. That might bring us all to reason.

4 April 1916

The state of my own and other people's mind surprises me. We are becoming callous to the horrors of the war. At first it was a continuous waking nightmare. But with a few months of it one ceases to feel about it. Today one goes on with one's researches, enjoys one's comforts and pleasures and even reads the daily war news with mild interest, exactly as if slaughter and devastation, on a colossal scale, were part of the expected routine of life. This callousness to the horrors of war explains the way in which the wealthy governing class have tolerated the horrors of peace due to the existing social order. Is there no depth of misery and degradation, endured by other persons, which will not be accepted as normal and inevitable?

5 July 1913

GBS has in fact injured the *New Statesman* by his connection with it; we have had the disadvantage of his eccentric and iconoclastic stuff without the advantage of his name. Lots of people will think any article brilliant that they know is by him, whilst dismissing his anonymous contribution as tiresome and of no account, or as purely mischievous.

13 July 1913

Charlotte Shaw asked me to come and see her one day last week. She was lying on the sofa looking unusually gentle and attractive. She told me, in a singularly gentle and dignified way, that GBS had fallen in love with Mrs Patrick Campbell and that most people knew it, that he was really obsessed by it and had fallen completely under that somewhat elderly witch's spell. (*She* did not call her an 'elderly witch'!) I was not surprised. When he was with us last November he talked incessantly about Mrs Pat and told me a lot of stupid stuff about her past relations with her husband, children and with the stage, as she imagined them to have been, and he repeated her silly and insolent remarks about Charlotte's big waist. I paid little attention to it, one is so accustomed to GBS's vanity and egotism. One used to watch these faults leading to all sorts of rather cruel philanderings with all kinds of odd females. But I had certainly thought he had outgrown this business. Though I was alarmed by it as a symptom of intellectual deterioration, it never occurred to me that it meant emotional disturbance.

From what I recollect of GBS's chatter about Mrs Pat the relationship is one of gross mutual flattery, each pandering to the other's morbid craving for the recognition of unique genius. . .

BY 1914 the Labour Party was eight years old, made up entirely of affiliated organisations most of them only reluctantly foregoing their old allegiance to the Liberal Party. Its leader was Ramsay MacDonald, neither a syndicalist nor a Fabian. He resigned in August 1914 because of his opposition to a war which, until it actually broke out, the Labour Party was pledged to oppose.

6 February 1914

The Labour Party conference was a personal triumph for J. R. MacDonald, (who) with his romantic figure, charming voice and clever dialectics, is more than a match for all those underbred and undertrained workmen who surround him on the platform and face him in the audience. So long as he chooses to remain leader of the Labour Party he will do so. In his old-fashioned radicalism, in his friendliness to Lloyd George, he represents the views and aspirations of the bulk of trade unionists. Owing to his personal distinction and middle-class equipment he is superior to all his would-be competitors.

GBS was rather attracted by their rebellious attitude, and in his summing-up address, mingled flattery and good advice. But it was all very exhausting to me, as I had to take the chair every day and stand between them and the hardworked establishment. I don't know why they adopted such defiant bad manners. They are obsessed with Guild Socialism and no other subject seems to them worth thinking about. They. . .apparently believe that the 'General Expropriatory Strike' is a working policy. It is all very surprising, as Cole is a really able man, with much concentrated energy. Fortunately they do not tamper with sex conventions — they seem to dislike women. But all other conventions they break or ignore.

28 August 1914

There are two perturbing moral paradoxes in this war. There has been a disgusting misuse of religious emotion in the assumption of the Almighty's approval of the aims of each of the conflicting group of combatants. France, it is true, has kept herself free from this loathesome cant, and our 'religiosity' has been tactfully limited to formal medieval phrases and to an Erastian prayer for the use of the established Church. But the Kaiser and the Tsar have outdone each other in fervent appeals to their tribal Gods: the German vulgar and familiar, the Russian dignified and barbaric. The theologians of Europe have disgraced themselves. . .This horrible caricature of religion is depressing.

The other disturbing reflection is that war is a stimulus to service, heroism and all forms of self-devotion. Hosts of men and women are willing to serve the community under this coarse stimulus who, in ordinary times, are dully immune to any other motive but self-interest qualified by self-indulgence. War, in fact, means an increase of corporate feeling and collective action in all directions. An unholy alliance, disconcerting to the collectivist who is also a believer in love as the bond between races as well as between individuals.

G. D. H. Cole

14 February 1915

I often speculate about G. D. H. Cole's future. He interests me because he shows remarkable intensity of purpose. Is he as persistent as intense? He has a clear-cutting and somewhat subtle intellect. But he lacks humour and the *bonhomie* which springs from it, and he has an absurd habit of ruling out everybody and everything that he does not happen to like or find convenient. Since the outbreak of war he has modified this attitude, and is now willing to work with the Labour Party in order to get into closer touch with the trade unions. He and Sidney irritate each other. Cole indulges in a long list of personal hatreds. The weak point of his outlook is that there is no one that he does like except as a temporary tool; he resents anyone who is not a follower and has a contempt for all leaders other than himself. With his keen intelligence and aristocratic temperament it is hard to believe that he will remain enamoured with the cruder forms of democracy embodied in the Guild Socialist idealization of the manual working class.

3 May 1915

The war has developed the antagonism between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the I.L.P. almost to a breaking point, the latter being now in close communion with the sentimental Whigs, whilst there is a distinct increase of friendliness between the 'Front Bench' of the Fabian Society and the Parliamentary Labour Party. Perhaps the most noted result is the consciousness of world failure on the part of the international labour and socialist movement, a consciousness of a certain self-deception — all our fine talk, all our glowing shibboleths are proved to be mere surface froth. . .There is no jingo mob. There is a section of the working class who are slacking and drinking, who, like the army contractors, are making the country's need the opportunity for exactions, but there is no popular anti-pacifist feeling. . .The criminal classes are

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the only ones to visibly improve in character. They have given up crime and enlisted in large numbers. The women of all classes have emerged into public life — industrial, social and militarist. . .

15 May 1915

At the annual meeting of the Fabian Society yesterday evening, the 'rebels' made their great attack on the Executive of the Fabian Society. . .

Cole disgraced himself and ruined his cause: first by an ill-tempered and tactless argument and then, when the vote went against him, by a silly display of temper. When the show of hands was decisively against the rebel resolution, someone suggested that there was no need to count. 'Let us know how many fools there are in the world', he spat out. When called to order, he sprang to his feet: 'I withdraw the word fools, I say "bloody fools".' Then, white with rage, he sprang from the platform and marched dramatically out of the hall, a few minutes later sending in a letter to Sanders, resigning his membership of the Society in terms which were meant to be insolent but were merely childish.

THE WEBBS visited the 1915 Trade Union Congress held in Bristol. The national body of the TUC was then the Parliamentary Committee. Ben Tillett, George Roberts, Havelock Wilson and John Hodges were all trade union officials.

Sidney and the war

25 September 1915

. . .Sidney has no vanity of personal ambition, he never feels that he is not getting his deserts: his reward is perfect peace of mind and always-present consciousness of 'good fortune'; he sits at his work, day in, day out, doing every job as it comes along, leaving the result, as he often says, 'in the lap of the gods'. He is far more philosophical about the war than I am. 'It is a sag back, but presently there will be a sag forward, and humanity will move forward to greater knowledge and greater goodwill: the Great War will seem to future generations a landmark of progress'.

I wonder: the evil let loose seems too stupendous.

9 September 1915

Sidney and I came here from Penalt on our way to London, to refresh our impression of current trade unionism and to ascertain the labour feeling about conscription and the war. The Parliamentary Committee is conventionally warlike and most of the elder trade union officials agree with it. . .

Indeed, the working-class assembly showed itself this morning quite primitive in its racial emotion. Tillett, Roberts, Havelock Wilson and Hodges made the usual patriotic speeches of the savage and uncompromising type, accusing the anti-war party of being 'cowards and traitors'. The bulk of the delegates were more good-tempered and tolerant: but they were out to win the war, and only seven out of three hundred held up their hands against the Parliamentary Committee's patriotic resolution.

BBC

The Webb partnership, Beatrice and Sydney

CONSCRIPTION was introduced in January 1916, stimulating the slowly growing working-class opposition to the conduct of the war. Robin Page Arnot moved from his syndicalist beliefs to become a founding member of the Communist Party in 1920.

9 March 1916

We are watching with amusement the three young men, who are the kernel of the Fabian Research Department, struggling to escape the net of conscription. Cole, Mellor and Arnot are pleading 'conscientious objection', also work of national importance. Disapproval of violence is certainly no part of their creed — they were always preaching violent action on the part of the manual workers, before the war, at least Cole and Mellor were; Arnot has, I think, certain qualms about the use of force. What they all detest is being forced to do anything they don't like, especially being forced to do it by a government they abhor. They are not conscientious objectors: they are professional rebels.

THE INTERNATIONAL Socialist Bureau (the Second International) had believed that international working class solidarity would prove more powerful than patriotism and prevent war. Its General Secretary was the Belgian, Camille Huysmans.

31 March 1916

Huysmans, the secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, is in London interviewing the executives represented in the British Section. . .

He was pessimistic about the future of the socialist movement: the bubble of 'Workers of the World Unite' was smashed for the next generation. Personally, he was most concerned to prevent the rise of a new International of the extreme pacifist revolutionary type, made of the *émigré* socialists from all countries, as the rival of the officially recognized body. It was for this purpose that he wanted some sort of declaration, whether or not this declaration had any influence on the terms of peace, for the express object of making it appear that there was some solidarity among socialists of all countries.

He did not convince us. It was the old game of shibboleths, acclaimed by all with fervour, without making the remotest difference to men's real thoughts or feelings, inside or outside the socialist movement. Confronted with millions killed and maimed on the battlefields, women and children massacred and whole countries devastated, 'International Socialist Brotherhood' had a hollow sound, like a mocking laugh at a funeral.

Next week: Nervous breakdown, revolution and the miners.

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Forgetting Cambodia

John Pilger

The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience
WILLIAM SHAWCROSS *Deutsch* £12.95

OF ALL THE memories I have of Cambodia in the summer of 1979, arriving in Phnom Penh remains indelible. A city the size of Manchester, it had been virtually emptied at gunpoint by the Khmer Rouge more than four years earlier. The surreal produced incredulity; the streets ran with money as new banknotes poured from the destroyed national bank during the afternoon downpour, empty trains stood at the station, cars, fire engines, ambulances and telephones rusted in a pile as if swept there by a huge Luddite broom wielded by a force which sought to abolish things and people linked to the modern world and to return a complete society to a glorious mediaeval past beyond 'Year Zero'.

The survivors of this Asian holocaust, in which the Khmer Rouge were responsible for the deaths of some two million people, perhaps many more, included starving skeletal children. In *The Quality of Mercy* William Shawcross quotes a correspondent of *The Times* at the liberation of Belsen: 'It is my duty to describe something beyond the imagination of mankind.' That was how I and others felt in 1979.

Almost one year later I returned to Phnom Penh with one of the aid agency people most responsible for starting the Western relief effort in Cambodia, Jim Howard of Oxfam. He found that 'all the supplies we've been putting in have got through' and that there had been no real corruption. 'In the circumstances', he said, 'I believe they have done an historic job of recovery.'

The 'historic job of recovery'; the cynicism of the continuing United Nations' recognition of the defunct Pol Pot regime; America's and China's sustenance and restoration of the Khmer Rouge, perhaps the most effective mass murderers since Hitler and Stalin — these are the truths about Cambodia most in danger of being expunged from our memories. In Shawcross's book these truths are to be found in fragments, scattered beneath a muddled and often contradictory mass of who-said-what-to-whom, culled from relief agencies and other sources.

As a witness during part of a critical period in Cambodia's history, especially August of 1979, I find much in this book that I and others who were there do not recognise. Shawcross's chronicle of the relief operation contains some valuable information — fragments — but to the uninformed the sheer volume of names, dates, statistics etc. merely belies the many omissions.

What is this book really about? Is it contemporary 'history'? I trust not. Not even a chapter of hand wringing over whither 'modern conscience' gives us a clue. My own impression is that the author has a theory, perhaps even an obsession, and has gone in search of facts to support it, regardless of their scarcity. In a major article published in America in 1980 Shawcross supported a false accusation that the Vietnamese were practising a form of genocide in the country they had rescued; and 'rescued' was the word I and others heard time and again from ordinary Khmer people. At that time Shawcross had not been to Cambodia for almost ten years and no real evidence to support his theory was forthcoming from reporters who had. For the purposes of this book it appears that the original Shawcross-endorsed theory of subtle genocide has been merged with a convoluted but essentially inane argument that comparisons of Pol Pot with Hitler and Cambodia's suffering with the Jewish Holocaust were part of a Vietnamese propaganda plot cooked up to obscure the similarities between themselves and the Khmer Rouge. That the two peoples and their regimes were so *different* is, of course, a fact almost impossible for a born-again cold warrior to digest.

Unwitting or not, this book is in keeping with those now recasting the history of Indochina in the spirit of the cold war, in which the Vietnamese experience is 'forgotten' and discredited and the American war is justified, the *cause* if not the execution, making way for future 'Vietnams'. Shawcross is unable or unwilling to accept that the Vietnamese are as much victims as anybody else: victims of an American adventure whose barbarities left them devastated, victims of Khmer Rouge atrocities over years, victims of constant Chinese attacks and a Chinese policy of 'bleeding' Vietnam, thereby trapping it in a siege mentality; and victims of the Soviet Union, the 'ally' with which Vietnam has been forced to associate itself and thus go against the grain of a long history of struggling free from dominant powers.

Equally, Shawcross is unable or unwilling to cast American actions and cynicism in Cambodia in the clear light of the American record in Indochina, part of which he himself documented in *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*. The US

John Pilger (left) takes issue with William Shawcross (above)

ambassador to Thailand in 1979/80 emerges as the book's only slightly flawed hero, regardless of the fact that many aid officials regarded his embassy's manipulation of the relief operation on the Thai border as aimed at restoring the Khmer Rouge and de-stabilising the governments of both Cambodia and Vietnam. Indeed, the Bangkok embassy seemed at times like the old US Saigon embassy in exile, with 'old Vietnam hands' seeking retribution for their recent humiliation. Unlike their old enemy, their *victims*, they are treated generously in Shawcross's book and top his 'thank you' list at the back.

Colonel Michael Eiland, now a leading spook in the Defence Intelligence Agency in Washington, tells Shawcross that his relief work for Cambodian refugees is 'dominated. . . by his first posting to a US Army base near Dachau'. Alas, Dachau must have slipped from the colonel's mind when he played a major role in the secret, illegal and massive bombing of Cambodian peasants in the 1970s — which Shawcross himself revealed in *Sideshow*.

One of this book's claims is that in Cambodia today former Khmer Rouge torturers are 'actually being promoted by the new order into positions of authority' over their former victims. Shawcross's sole hard evidence for this appears to be a story which he relates twice.

> In one fishing village. . .I met an old woman who described with great passion how the Khmer Rouge murderer of her son was living, unpunished, in the neighbouring village.

In a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books* the Australian Khmer scholar Ben Kiernan, one of the few Westerners able to speak Khmer, writes that he took part in the interview in the village and tape-recorded it. Kiernan says

> The woman actually said that the killer had 'run away' to a neighbouring *district*. This rather suggests that he at least feared punishment, and there was certainly no suggestion that he had been 'promoted' to 'new authority'. Here is an interesting example of a writer's memory drifting with his views.

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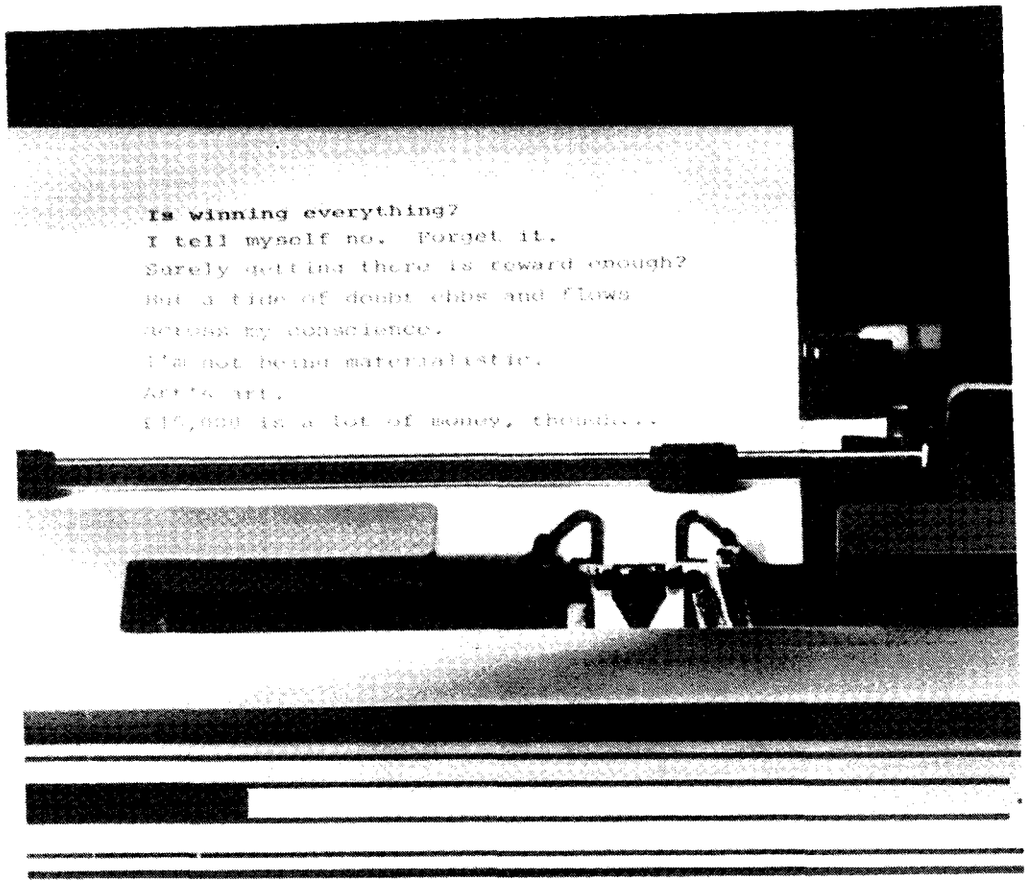
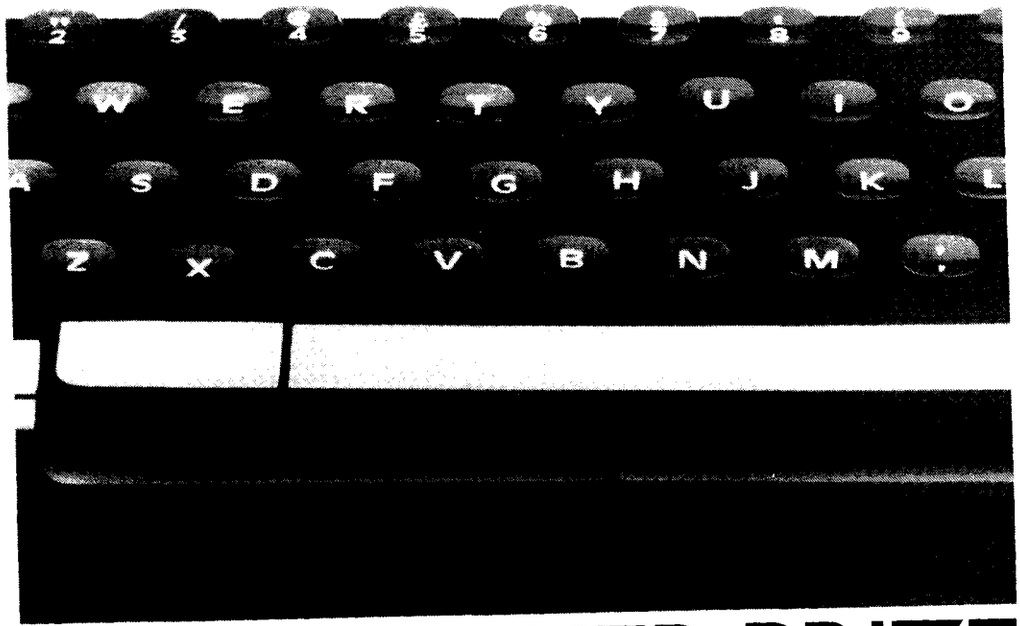

Is winning everything?
I tell myself no. Forget it.
Surely getting there is reward enough?
But a tide of doubt ebbs and flows
across my conscience.
I'm not being materialistic.
Art's art.
£15,000 is a lot of money, though...



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Shawcross offered no defence to this, but wrote that he and Kiernan had met other former Khmer Rouge officials who 'seemed rather unpleasant'. In similar vein he writes in his book that he was told in Phnom Penh that 'no Cambodian was supposed to talk to foreigners without permission'. Well, I interviewed dozens of people without permission and at random, as indeed have countless journalists, researchers and others. Shawcross also accuses the Vietnamese of allowing no 'exhaustive examination of the records of the Khmer Rouge'. Much of the *New Statesman* of 2 May 1980 was devoted to the translations by Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua of a welter of Khmer Rouge documents brought back from Phnom Penh by Anthony Barnett. Kiernan himself later copied 5,000 documents; even a researcher working on a US Government grant was allowed to copy thousands of pages.

By 1983, writes Shawcross,

> propaganda threatened to bury the real and dreadful history of the recent past under new lies, new exaggerations, new ideological contraptions, that it was in danger of being obliterated and thus forgotten.

How ironic his words are; should we ever lose our memory of events in Cambodia, and their meaning, this book will have played its part. □

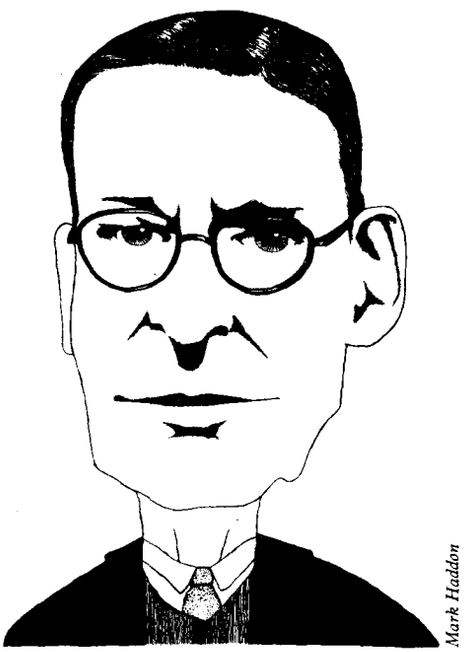
Unvarnished

David Montrose

T.S. Eliot
PETER ACKROYD *Hamish Hamilton* £12.50

AS EARLY as 1925, when only 36, Eliot expressed the wish that no biography of himself should ever be written. This opposition, reiterated in his will, has been sustained — not always to the desired effect — by his widow. Peter Ackroyd, like prospective biographers and critics before him, was denied Mrs Eliot's co-operation and forbidden to quote from either Eliot's unpublished writings or, beyond the minimum allowed by the copyright laws, his published work. Much information, though, was obtainable elsewhere, while the unquotable could still be paraphrased. Above all, Ackroyd could ransack the numerous autobiographies and reminiscences in which Eliot figures prominently. Nobody who has taken an interest in Eliot's life will receive any major surprises from the result, although lesser ones do pop up: learning, for instance, that he sometimes wore pale green face-powder. Ackroyd generally presents a familiar chronicle of constant hard work (dogged by recurrent self-doubt and writing blocks), constant ill health and, except during Eliot's childhood and his second marriage, constant unhappiness.

But a familiar chronicle is not necessarily an undistinguished one. Ackroyd has assembled the scattered record of Eliot's life scrupulously, excluding the untrue, tagging the uncertain, producing easily the most thorough synthesis available. Though not a critical biography, it does contain some acute, if mostly brief, appraisals of Eliot's work, with his literary and social criticism undergoing distinctly severe treatment. At times, a slightly anthological air is evident — divers sources being cited in close succession — but mostly when Ackroyd seeks to highlight the different impressions Eliot made, often deliberately, on different acquaintances. In fact, a strength of Ackroyd's portrayal is that he recognises the heterogeneity of Eliot's character and his gift for dramatising its various aspects. (V.S. Pritchett called him 'a company of actors inside one suit'.) Distrusting his emotions, desiring self-possession, Eliot confronted life — as, to some extent, we all do — with an assortment of roles, notably a demeanour of patient reserve, even coldness (though he was also capable of violent anger, of childish practical jokes). In an interview with Ian Hamilton, Ackroyd has remarked how this tendency was 'mirrored by his playing of poetic roles'.



Mark Haddon

Eliot's attitude towards biography has convinced many that there are dark secrets to uncover, and speculation is one thing Mrs Eliot has rarely managed to inhibit. Unsurprisingly, attention has centred on Eliot's impulsive and soon miserable first marriage, to Vivien Haigh-Wood in 1915. The earliness of his decision against any biography appears to support this line. Some 'psychobiographical' critics have connected the marriage and *The Waste Land*, analysing each in the light of the other. The poem has been cited as evidence of Eliot's homosexual passion for Jean Verdenal, the young Frenchman to whose memory he dedicated *Prufrock and Other Observations*. It has been suggested that, hearing of Verdenal's death at Gallipoli, Eliot married on the rebound.

Ackroyd eschews guesswork of this kind, believing that a preoccupation with the assumed secrets — whose existence he doubts — 'obscures the true nature of Eliot's life, just as it diminishes his poetry'. He does not altogether shun interpreting events, but is careful never to exceed reasonable inference. Occasionally, indeed, he seems too tentative. He appears, for instance, to have plausibly evaluated Eliot's motivations in marrying Vivien. Twenty-six when they met, still a virgin, Eliot had never experienced serious romance. Such a man would tend to become quickly and deeply, even if unwisely, involved. Ackroyd, however, shrinks from expounding this viewpoint directly. The same applies to his account of Eliot's eventual abandonment of Vivien, after years of hesitation, in 1932. He left alone for an American lecture-tour, arranging for Vivien to receive separation papers in his absence. Returning, he refused to see her. While accepting that a separation was justified, Ackroyd by no means excuses the way Eliot achieved one. But he hints at, instead of stating, the obvious interpretations: that, loathing scenes, Eliot was temperamentally unable to leave in any other fashion and that, having at last forced himself into decisive action, he needed to be inflexible to carry it through.

Nevertheless, Ackroyd conveys admirably the Eliots' complicated relationship. Though never understating the degree to which Vivien was an emotional and financial burden, he shows that there was more to the marriage than Vivien's growing instability — she was finally committed to a mental home in 1938, dying there nine years later — and 'poor Tom's' growing desperation. Certainly, during their first decade together, a strong element of mutual dependence existed. Vivien, indeed, helped Eliot edit *Criterion* and acted as a sounding-board for his poems-in-progress. And, as Eliot acknowledged, if the marriage was often hell for him, it was often hell for her, too.

Ackroyd's abstinence from speculation also embraces Eliot's writing. While concerned to place 'life and work in a proper relation to each other', he disdains psychobiographical exorbitance. Considering *The Waste Land* — so rich a mine for speculators — he even refers sceptically to its 'supposedly autobiographical sections'.

The guesswork about Eliot's life recalls that about Swift's concerning his involvement with 'Stella' and 'Vanessa'. Ackroyd's biography, like J.A. Downie's recent life of Swift, has the substantial virtue of retailing the established facts without too much varnish. There is, admittedly, a slight falling-off in its final third, which deals with the mid-1930s onwards. (Ackroyd finds the younger Eliot, as both man and writer, more interesting than the older.) Even so, it is immeasurably superior to the only previous full-scale biography: T.S. Matthews's *Great Tom: Notes Towards the Definition of T.S. Eliot* (1974). Of that book, John Updike remarked that we would have been little poorer had Eliot's prohibition been honoured. That is certainly not the case this time. □

Among this week's contributors:

JON COOK lectures in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia; he is the co-author of *Romanticism and Ideology*.

JULIA HAGEDORN was features editor of *Junior Education* and *Child Education* and now writes for the *Guardian* and the *TES* among others.

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FICTION

Questions

Richard Deveson

A Late Divorce
A.B. YEHOSHUA *Harvill Press* £8.95
The Glamour
CHRISTOPHER PRIEST *Cape* £8.50
Flaubert's Parrot
JULIAN BARNES *Cape* £8.50
In Custody
ANITA DESAI *Heinemann* £7.95

A.B. YEHOSHUA's **A Late Divorce** is very fine. It is the story of an unhappy Israeli family and it is the story of the unhappy family that is Israel. Yehuda Kaminka, the father of three grown-up children, has come back to Israel on a flying visit to get a divorce from his wife Naomi, who is confined in a mental hospital near Acre; another woman, with baby-to-be, awaits him in America. In nine chapters, each describing one day of the visit, the nine characters speak in turn: the young grandson, the daughter, the son-in-law, the son, the daughter-in-law, the other son, his lover and, finally, Naomi and then Yehuda himself. Each of these characters is brilliantly realised, not only through his or her own voice (much technical virtuosity here, including stream of consciousness, a psycho-analytic session, a dialogue for one speaker, a flash forward), but also, gradually, through the voices of each of the others.

And like the characters and like life itself, the story too emerges in fragments, in contradictions, gropings into the dark of the future, memories only half recovered from the past. Did Naomi try to murder Yehuda? What is Yehuda up to? What do his children want of him? It becomes only too apparent that they are all suffering and that the family's crisis has brought about a kind of collective family breakdown.

The voices scarcely pause for description, but a modern Israel nevertheless gets ruthlessly described: the squashed crowds on buses, the constant phone calls, the over-full apartments, the supermarkets, schools and synagogues, hitchhiking, financial fiddling, pimping, kibbutz choirs singing on the radio while the wintry rain falls in the week before Passover. Yehoshua's view of his country is deeply pessimistic. Here is a society which, when it isn't merely aggressive or uncharitable or introverted, is teetering into and out of madness. 'Can you be a homeland?' Yehuda asks, and this is the book's central question. The man who tries to break with Israel (s.c. divorce his wife) ends by losing his sanity and his life. Parallels between the personal and the political aren't to all tastes, of course, and, unlike Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, this book hasn't got the intellectual and historical range and penetration entirely to escape the charge of tendentiousness. But thank goodness for a novel that is ambitious and humane and that is about things that really matter.

The Glamour is almost impossible to

Gerald Abraham. Peter Ackroyd. Fleur Adcock. Brian Aldiss. Kingsley Amis. Noel Annan. Timothy Garton Ash. John Ashbery. Gillian Avery. Reyner Banham. Julian Barnes. John Bayley. Bernard Bergonzi. T.J. Binyon. Christopher Booker. Malcolm Bradbury. Edward Kamau Brathwaite. Asa Briggs. Samuel Brittan. Joseph Brodsky. Anita Brookner. Brigid Brophy. Tina Brown. Kevin Brownlow. Julian Budden. Anthony Burgess. Alec Cairncross. Arthur Calder-Marshall. Italo Calvino. Humphrey Carpenter. Raymond Carr. Michael Carver. Charles Causley. Anthony Clare. John Clive. J.M. Coetzee. Isabel Colegate. Stefan Collini. Robert Conquest. Patricia Craig. A.C. Danto. Donald Davie. Michael Davie. Russell Davies. Richard Dawkins. Norman del Mar. Rosemary Dinnage. Denis Donoghue. Georges Duby. Maureen Duffy. Douglas Dunn. Terry Eagleton. G.R. Elton. D.J. Enright. Gavin Ewart. James Fenton. Patrick Leigh Fermor. Margaret Forster. Roy Foster. Charles Fox. Joseph Frank. John Fuller. Roy Fuller. P.N. Furbank. Mark Girouard. Victoria Glendinning. Lawrence Gowing. Simon Gray. Peter Green. Geoffrey Grigson. John Gross. Thom Gunn. Elizabeth Hardwick. Ian Hamilton. Barbara Hardy. Tony Harrison. Francis Haskell. Patricia Highsmith. Christopher Hill. Geoffrey Hill. Tim Hilton. Christopher Hitchens. Eric Hobsbawm. Harold Hobson. Michael Hofmann. Christopher Hogwood. Michael Holroyd. Michael Howard. Liam Hudson. Ted Hughes. Michael Ignatieff. Mick Imlah. Dan Jacobson. P.D. James. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Paul Johnson. P.N. Johnson-Laird. Gabriel Josipovici. Simon Karlinsky. Alfred Kazin. Oliver Knussen. Jonathan Keates. John Keegan. Peter Kemp. Hugh Kenner. Eric Korn. Stephen Koss. Emanuel le Roy Ladurie. Philip Larkin. Hermione Lee. Mary K. Lefkowitz. Peter Levi. Hugh Lloyd-Jones. David Lodge. Edna Longley. Michael Longley. Steven Lukes. Adrian Lyttelton. Colin MacCabe. Ian McEwan. Iain McGilchrist. Adam Mars-Jones. Wilfrid Mellers. Oliver Millar. Janet Morgan. Blake Morrison. Andrew Motion. Paul Muldoon. Dervla Murphy. Les A. Murray. R.K. Narayan. Joseph Needham. Jill Neville. Norman Nicholson. Julia O'Faolain. Redmond O'Hanlon. Tom Paulin. Ben Pimlott. Harold Pinter. Richard Poirier. Peter Porter. S.S. Prawer. Anthony Quinton. Craig Raine. Michael Ramsey. Claude Rawson. Piers Paul Read. Peter Redgrove. Christopher Reid. Pat Rogers. Richard Rorty. Carol Rumens. Lorna Sage. Gamini Salgado. Anthony Sampson. Leslie Scarman. Michael Schmidt. S. Schoenbaum. Roger Scruton. A.W.B. Simpson. C.H. Sisson. Susan Sontag. Stephen Spender. Hilary Spurling. Gavin Stamp. George Steiner. J.I.M. Stewart. Norman Stone. Anthony Storr. P.F. Strawson. Graham Swift. Julian Symons. Wilfred Thesiger. D.M. Thomas. Hugh Thomas. Anthony Thwaite. Charles Tomlinson. Burke Trend. Hugh Trevor-Roper. Frank Tuohy. E.S. Turner. Marina Warner. Mary Warnock. Eugen Weber. John Weightman. Stanley Wells. Richard West. Laurence Whitehead. John Willett. Hugo Williams. A.N. Wilson. Richard Wollheim. Michael Wood. Peregrine Worsthorne. Hugo Young. Zinovy Zinik.

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review. The blurb says rather threateningly that it would be 'unthinkable' to reveal much about the story; it certainly wouldn't be very nice. A man has partially lost his memory after a car-bomb explosion and, during convalescence, is introduced to a girl who says they were lovers during the period he can't remember; he can't even remember her. Later, the nihilistic Niall comes into view and he isn't very nice either, even though he's 'glamorous'. You're going to have to read this novel yourself.

Christopher Priest's control is masterly. Rather like an Escher painting, the book uses a series of clear and simple steps to create an apparently irrefutable impossibility. Like an Escher, too, it's perhaps ultimately something of a tease. Not just: now you see it, now you don't; but possibly there isn't really anything there to be seen. But, again, you're going to have to see what you can see for yourself.

Two Booker beauty contestants on the catwalk this week. Julian (vital statistics: 190pp × 222 × 144mm) Barnes likes France, funny words and watching TV. Dislikes: being thought obvious. **Flaubert's Parrot** purports to be the work of a retired doctor and Flaubert freak (who, however, often sounds rather like Julian Barnes) and is an attention-getting assortment of chapters that include rambling feuilleton-ish essays, chronologies, thoughts on *Flaubert on animals, thoughts on Flaubert and* trains, Louise Colet's version of her affair with Flaubert and a spoof exam paper ('Consider the relationship between Art and Life suggested by any *two* of the following statements or situations'). Barnes himself, as befits a representative of the Eternal Undergraduate school of writing, certainly commands a superb exam technique: clear exposition, prestige points, jokes (good ones), knowingness.

The parrot is the one in Flaubert's *Un coeur simple*; also the one that Flaubert kept on his desk while writing the story. Or, rather, the two different stuffed parrots the doctor finds in two different museums, each alleged to be Flaubert's original. The doctor asks, 'Why does writing make us chase the writer? . . . The writer's choice — what makes you think it can be located that easily?' To be heavy and obvious: the book is about the relationship between the once-living writer (and parrots, etc.) and the work that survives, and about the irrecoverability of the past. More simply, it's also a portrait of Flaubert.

But this book also desperately wants to be unobvious and that's the trouble. More impressive, intellectually, than the sheer volume of esoteric source material exploited, is the texture of motifs and images and phrases cross-referring to one another — but their point is unobvious unto inscrutability. The device of the doctor is half-hearted, but is that the point too? Is the whole book an ultra-Flaubertian exercise in self-parodying levitation, so that all it's about is itself?

Anita Desai's **In Custody** is somewhat disappointing, though this may be largely a matter of individual temperament. Here is one reader who just happens not to warm to what seems to be yet another critical but fond picture of the shortcomings of India, the mess and ignorance and incompetence whose existence is either denied with swindling bluster or acknowledged with a sad sense of defeat. Deven, a teacher at an *n*th-rate provincial college, falls into the clutches of a friend who gets him to seek out a famous poet; their foredoomed literary project sinks Deven deeper and deeper into exploitation, humiliation and despair, though he stays self-destructively faithful to the poetry that represents for him freedom and the ideal, as against the falling-short that is life. But Anita Desai succeeds entirely in showing what she wants to show: the nightmarish household of the poet Nur, all half-open doors and glimpses and squalor and hangers-on; the buffaloes, lights and cinema loudspeakers of Delhi; the pathos of Deven's idealism amid the dust and dirt of his own little Mirpore. Anita (204pp × 222 × 143mm) comes from India, likes children and poetry, and could cop that meat-market coronet as every judge's second choice. □

Democratic critic

Jon Cook

Using Biography
WILLIAM EMPSON *Chatto* £12.95

THROUGH the playful, needling intricacy of Empson's style, a number of clear points emerge from his last book, *Using Biography*. One is that literary critics, if they don't try to eliminate an account of authorial intention from critical analysis altogether, have a tendency to turn writers into fools or monsters or both. Worse still, they seem quite unaware of this tendency, quite unaware, that is, of the background assumptions that enter into their particular judgments of literary works. And this leads to something else which provokes Empson's humour and scorn: the critical habit of pressing literary works into the service of authoritarian and repressive ideologies, all this, of course, under the comforting guise that to receive authority in this way does us good. The typical situation can be readily pictured: the well-heeled critical prig wagging his finger at the naughty prole for preferring beer to the bible. Anyone who has been on the receiving end of a literary education will probably know the feeling.

This authoritarian and moralising reflex has become particularly marked in academic literary criticism over the last 40 years. To his credit, Empson has been engaged in a long battle with the critical prigs who give us instructions on what we shouldn't do when we read. *Using Biography* is sadly the final round in the contest. The long battle explains the polemical tone of some of the pieces in the book, whether it's a matter of saving Marvell's marriage from the critics who would have him as a celibate poet or of protecting Joyce's writings from the sour embrace of Catholicism. Hence, too, the importance of biography because it is by appeal to the local circumstances which attended an author's work that Empson enables us to read it anew in the face of the authoritarian critic's desire to have the last word and so close down the possibilities of further reading.

Empson's use of biography is never reductive. He treats various authors and works — Marvell, Dryden, Fielding, Yeats, Eliot and Joyce — but not in a way that makes a poem or a novel into a simple expression of biographical circumstance. Instead two things happen: one is that a literary work becomes a way of rewriting an author's life. So *Ulysses* becomes an intricate account of what might have happened to Joyce had he not married Nora and left Ireland. The other has to do with Empson's sense that in an important literary work there are going to be powerful forces in play and that these will include some obsession in the writer's history arising out of an unresolved problem in sexual or domestic life or in establishing a public career.

Biography, then, in Empson's hands, is about the combination of conscious and unconscious motives that enter into a piece of writing. If this makes him sound like a Freudian critic, there's a certain truth in the description. Empson was among the first critics writing in English to respond to Freud's theory of the unconscious, just as he was one of the first to combine elements of Freudian and Marxist thinking in his book, *Some Versions of Pastoral*. The theoretical range is evident in *The Uses of Biography*: in the Freudian turn that he gives to his account of the symbolism of the dead father in Eliot's *Waste Land* or in the Marxism that finds a resonance of class conflict in Fielding's attack on Richardson. But these insights do not come like hammer blows designed to convince us of the validity of this or that theoretical system. They are absorbed into a style of thinking which is endlessly provisional and heuristic, and always alert to comic nuance. So Fielding's conflict with Richardson inverts class antagonisms rather than straightforwardly representing them:

> The printer's apprentice was the gentlemanly expert on manners, indeed the first English writer to be accepted as one by the polite French; whereas if you went to see Fielding...you would find him drunk in bed with his cook & still

Lachlan Mackinnon

Carnal knowledge

I would use up three pens a term.
I bent my nibs
into an eagle's tearing
and rending bill.
They would splutter and stop.
If I believe in omens
it will have been a warning, it will make
sense of what happened next.

Cigarettes in the trespassed garden
with another boy's girl-friend. She went home
down the hill through the tall woods.
Astray, lingering, fearful,
I watched the prickling of the stars
Where the bushy November clouds drew back.
The trees kept brushing over them
Like knowing I too had a home to go to.

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boasting he was related to the Hapsburgs.

These sentences are characteristic in that a sophisticated point about class relations is developed through a farcical anecdote. The comic gesture reminds us that Empson was never afraid of going over the top in his response to literature, even though discreet professors might be tut-tutting behind their hankies.

But there was more to it than being a naughty boy. Recourse to comedy points to a deep, instructive tension in Empson's work: an intensely cerebral and analytic critic, he also had the courage to admit the sadistic inclinations of the analytic mind. Boastful Fielding in bed with the cook may be there to illustrate the analysis, but he also helps us to forget it for a moment. The style allows for a comic wisdom which mitigates the effects of intellectual systems. Some have found this trait in Empson's writing a betrayal of the high seriousness appropriate to criticism or a regression to a bluff common-sense manner. They fail to see its place in the whole manner of the argument, one of whose effects is to keep on switching the perspective: Fielding may be seen as a character in a bed-room farce but it's not long before Empson reminds us that he was a serious critic of 18th-century moral orthodoxy.

The result is a rare achievement which combines a comic sense with an unrelenting dedication to the work of literary criticism. What Empson offers is not a theory of literature or a single method of analysis but a model of how to read with pleasure and knowledge. Characteristically, the attention is always on the particular circumstance, work or mystery. Empson's critical demonstrations are immersed in active forms of social and historical life. But then the remarkable effect is that you find yourself in possession of a general truth: a knowledge of the intricacies of Marvell's married life or his investments on the stock-exchange suddenly connects to a sense of the changing status of the writer in the 17th century.

Empson does not bully the reader into accepting the general truth, it is implicit in the material. And this indicates something even more valuable, a model of democratic criticism. Empson addresses his authors and his audience as equals. Whatever he knows we can know too if we can take the trouble. Nor is there anything which cannot in principle be known, no shimmering mysteries called God or History.

What is shared between Empson and his readers is not a simple comfort: it means knowing about the cruelties inflicted in the name of state religions, about the place of sadistic rage in human history and the moral disguises that it can take. But what is also shared is a knowledge that, however desperate the circumstances, there's usually a way out, if only in writing a great poem. Contemporary critical prigs, whether they make their pious offerings to the literary tradition or worship the great god theory, will no doubt find *Using Biography* an insufficient or eccentric work, but I suspect that Empson will have the last laugh. □

Child's game

Julia Hagedorn

The Invisible Children: Child Prostitution in America, Germany and Britain
GITTA SERENY *Deutsch* £9.95

THERE are no hard statistics for children working in the sex industry — prostitution, pornography and blue movies. But it is a fair assumption to make, as Gitta Sereny does, that the majority of under-age children who run away, and stay away, from home will quickly turn to prostitution as the one means they have of earning a living. In England and Wales, this could be any number out of the 13,000 to 15,000 juveniles who run away from home each year. And to this number could be added any of the 6,000 or so who abscond annually from children's homes and institutions.

The figures may be guesswork, but Gitta Sereny wrote this book because she was appalled by the extent of the problem and by the extent to which the authorities deliberately suppress their knowledge of it. She hoped that by talking to the young prostitutes in collaboration with their social workers or other caring adults, some of them at least would begin to think about giving up the life.

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Ms Sereny is an investigative journalist of some standing. She has also worked with displaced children — after the last war. In her interviews with the 12 teenagers she finally chose out of the 161 boys and girls that she met, she brings both experiences to bear. Her book is made up almost entirely of the edited transcripts of the lengthy tape-recorded conversations she had with the 12 over a period of a year and a half.

Sadly, she does not engage our sympathy much. Perhaps she was too involved with her interviewees (and no one could doubt her sincerity and compassion). Perhaps her compulsion to understand the twilight zone she was exploring led her to overlook the monotony of many of the conversations. Since there is little attempt at analytical comment, and physical descriptions of the girls have been altered to avoid identification, we are dependent on these conversations for any new insight or understanding. And there is little here that we did not know or guess at already. The girls' identities merge into an endless catalogue of violence, sex, self-destruction and, it must be said, greed. In the end, we confuse American Cassie 'I guess it's like an addiction. I just get so used to going out there' (on her fifth pimp and around $300 a night) with German Annette who says, 'It's as if I was working in a shop and sell somebody a bag of sweeties and he pays. Thank you. Auf Wiedersehen, that's it.'

By the time we reach Nellie in London (around £700 a week) we accept that starting out 'on the game' isn't so difficult since most of the girls have already lost their virginity and 'for most of them, at 12, 13 or 14 what they had at home with their boyfriends wasn't so fantastic either'. We are beginning to be blasé about the horror of these young lives. And that is surely not the effect the author intended.

Even worse, since, as Gitta Sereny says herself, many of the girls fantasise about events past and present, one begins to wonder if they are not simply embroidering their tales because it is so much more comfortable in Ms Sereny's hotel room than out on the street.

GITTA SERENY comes to the conclusion that every runaway child who goes into full-time prostitution has a history of continual and profound family conflict and that we must accept that some children ultimately just cannot live with their parents. There would surely be no dissenters to this hypothesis and, if the book starts anyone thinking about a realistic alternative, then there will be some value in the writing of it.

But in the end, the enduring memory that the reader will carry away is not of the Cassies and the Annettes and the Nellies but of a frozen-faced nine-year-old Peruvian Indian girl whom Gitta Sereny mentions in the introduction. *She* has no choice. Sold by her family for £10, she not only works from 5a.m. until late at night, she also has to submit to the embraces of the inn-keeper, his son, his grandson and any customer who has the five cents to pay. Her plight is a far cry from the two part-timers in London who sell themselves on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons to make money for discos, clothes, taxi fares and grass. □

THEATRE

Passion play

Benedict Nightingale

Fool for Love
SAM SHEPARD *Cottesloe*

WHEN I first saw *Fool for Love*, in New York last year, I wondered if Sam Shepard hadn't succeeded in writing and directing an all-American *Phèdre*. 'That's fine,' he had reportedly told his performers in rehearsal, 'but take it further, further still'; and they'd responded with heart, stomach and other parts not quite nice to mention. The result was, as Shepard wanted, powerful proof of the unruliness of love, a production that did all due justice to a play that persistently caps one piece of emotional testimony with another and then another.

First, we've a woman alternately raging and clutching at a man who turns out to be her half-brother, and who is himself no less fixated on her. They'd been living in a desolate trailer-park far away, he'd sexually betrayed her, she'd fled to the desert motel within whose mouldering walls the action occurs, he's come to reclaim her. It's all happened before, and it will doubtless all happen again, because May and Eddie, as they're called, seem equally unable to live with or without each other. Then, suddenly and frighteningly, there comes out of the darkness a glare of headlights, a screech of brakes, the bang of a shotgun, the crash of glass. One of his crazier ex-mistresses is making her envy rather drastically known.

Nor is Shepard finished. Onstage, we've one of those long, haunting monologues for which he's celebrated, this time describing the bigamous loves of the couple's father and his wives' abject and finally suicidal obsession with him. The old man himself, ghost or memory or both, sits on the edge of the motel room, rocking and drinking and interjecting the odd protest. Offstage, there's a second jealous visitation, an explosion, dancing flames, the sound of terrified horses charging from Eddie's burning truck. The fourth and final character, an amiable wimp, who came expecting nothing more than a relaxed date with May at the movies, is left boggling at the X-ratable sensations unfolding around him. So, come to that, was I, in that Off-Broadway theatre.

Shepard's production certainly flirted with melodrama; but flirtation never became consummation, thanks to the authenticity of the acting. Nor does it at the Cottesloe, though Peter Gill conscientiously obeys some pretty savage stage-directions. Walls are butted, floorboards battered. Doors slam shut with a boom that emphasises that the main characters have metaphorically trapped themselves in a prison, a cage custom-built for the mental torture of human rats. It's when we get to the performances proper that the danger of melodrama recedes and, with it, some of the intensity that shivered my emotional timbers in America. Julie Walters finds plenty of pain and rage in herself, but you couldn't quite say she was emitting 'agonising mournful wails' or that her whole body 'wept' as the original script dauntingly demanded. There's nothing coiled and violent inside the seedy-cowboy exterior of Ian Charleson's Eddie, either.

That's a pity, and not altogether a pity. We feel what we didn't in America, that these lovers do also have minds, minds in unequal combat with the forces milling below. Nor are we so engulfed by the proliferating passions onstage that we risk missing the other matters the play involves. Several longer-term Shepardisms are here: a rueful nostalgia for an extinct West, signalled by Eddie's wan attempts to lasso, of all pointless objects, the motel bedposts; the preoccupation with a callous, rejecting, yet still cherished father, present though absent; the suggestion that memory is elusive, perception unreliable, truth a self-serving blend of fact and wish, difficult to disentangle; more.

Actually, the play can be seen as the latest episode in a quest that's very American, yet maybe more than American. Shepard's people constitute a great legion of the lost, with himself their flummoxed and floundering leader, together searching for things that are incompatible and possibly not attainable even singly: excitement and security, the exhilaration of self-fulfilment and a sense of belonging, freedom and roots. He looks to the Old Frontier, where men walked tall, and finds either squalor or concrete. *True West*, the subject as well as the title of his last play at the National, is summed up by two brothers, each aware of his own insufficiency: thuggish Lee, who drifts between no-hope hamlets in the outback, gambling on his fighting dog; deadly Austin, who 'drives on the freeway, smells the smog, watches the news in colour, shops in the Safeway'. In another play Shepard eloquently if highhandedly evokes the great City of the Angels, where families stood staring at the Pacific after slowly creaking across a continent, in terms of nasty green ooze and fanged men with green skin.

Nor is the American home an especially cosy refuge from the money-men, the real-estate swindlers and other such representatives of the larger American family. Out there, in Norman Rockwell country, the avocados are rotting on the tree, father is drunkenly smashing in the door, mother surreptitiously selling the house and an idiot called Tilden lumbering through the front room with the shrunken corpse of the innocent child its parents long ago drowned. The title of one of Shepard's recent plays on the subject, *Curse of the Starving Class*, says much. What's being handed down from generation to generation in those forlorn little ranch houses is more curse than nourishment, a seemingly unalterable muddle, lovelessness and sense of loss.

Fool for Love is partly an imaginative resumé, partly another step in Shepard's doleful argument. The family is destructive yet inescapable, a grotesque mutation that maims as it embraces. May and Eddie's incestuous writhings, quietly observed by the man who fathered and then deserted them, are a pretty spectacular symptom of that. But the fact that their love is a bit Byronic shouldn't shock us into forgetting that it's also and actually love. Shepard's quest has taken him from society to family to personal relationships, and there, too,

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all seems confusion, uncertainty, despair. 'The proper response to love is to accept it,' runs Shepard's epigraph, 'there is nothing to *do*.' But wherever you look in the play there are obstacles, guilts, failures; refusals of love.

At one admittedly obscure moment (the play offers thunder, lightning and the occasional patch of fog) it's implied that reality is only a maniac fantasy, fantasy a truer reality. And the renegade father ends strangely contented, having strangely decided he's 'really' married to Barbara Mandrell 'in my mind'. Is that the end of Shepard's quest, the resolution of his woes — the discovery that the imagination is the best refuge of all, the place to be fulfilled and whole? Perhaps, perhaps not. Either way, we can rely on him to continue bringing a distinctively American eye, ear and intelligence to the diagnosis of what are, if you think about it, universal anxieties. □

FILMS

Year of the rat

John Coleman

Nineteen Eighty-Four (15)
Odeon, Haymarket
The Highest Honour (15)
Classics, Tottenham Court Road and Chelsea; Odeon, Kensington
The Woman in Red (15)
Leicester Square Theatre; London suburban release
The Philadelphia Experiment (PG)
ABCs, Shaftesbury Avenue, Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Road

John Hurt's Winston dreams of Richard Burton's O'Brien as a father figure

THAT IT HAS been brought in and put out in the commercially appropriate year is already an achievement. But that **Nineteen Eighty-Four**, scripted and directed by Michael Radford, produced by Simon Perry, should have been so finely brought off is something else again. After Michael Anderson's 1955 film version, so 'freely adapted from George Orwell' as to cast a paunchy Edmund O'Brien as the doomed Winston Smith and then to mar that doom by an up-beat shout of 'Down with Big Brother' as bullets thudded home, Sonia Orwell was rightly distressed and, on the expiry of Warners' rights in 1974, would brook no further showing of the travesty.

Somehow, a movie-mad American lawyer Marvin Rosenblum worked on her so that, before her death at the end of 1980, she gave him TV rights and a film option on the awkward fiction. For it was a bothersome, misunderstood novel from the moment of its publication. Some saw it as pure anti-Communist propaganda, some ('Ingsoc') as a smack at our domestic Labour Party: only the alert recognised it as a harshly satiric warning against totalitarianism anywhere and, notably, as a klaxon loudly sounding against verbal traffic-jams with an inevitable simplification of language to the point of readily adjusted sloganism, mental serfdom.

Relief, then, that the producer-director partnership which had resulted in Michael Radford's marvellous debut, *Another Time, Another Place*, with its gritty intimacies of private revolt, should be able and poised to render an intelligent account of the Orwell. Radford has sensibly chosen to junk the apparatus of science-fiction (an obligation, anyway, laid on him by the terms of Mrs Orwell's agreement with Rosenblum) and set the dire happenings back in a London with roughly the technical limitations of 1948, the year of the book's completion. Drear, dirty and soul-sapping locations have been found, shown in depleted colour, for our Big-Brother-dominated segment of the state of Oceania, constantly at war with either Eurasia or Eastasia. It is a place of bomb-sites, drizzle, slums and omnipresent giant and home television screens exhorting the citizenry, reporting military triumphs and endless statistics of armament, reproving — in a harsh woman's voice and person — John Hurt's slackness at morning PT. In this appalling landscape there is precious little relief from official announcements, the recurring face of moustached Big Brother, the sight of public confessions, of admonitory hangings.

Hurt, of course, is spot on for inwardly rebellious Winston, a worker at the Records Section of the Ministry of Truth, where director/writer Radford has him once at least altering history after his own whim: that phiz is quite constructed for a gamut of intelligent anguish and it is easily on the cards that such pained sensitivity should attract the no-nonsense Julia of Suzanna Hamilton (a girl who commutes between *jolie* and *laide* with fierce sexuality). Equally, this Winston is ideal meat for Richard Burton's almost caressing O'Brien, a privileged Inner Party member who woos the nonconformist who has found a bedroom to rent over a dilapidated odds-and-sods shop run by (how keenly the film is cast) Cyril Cusack, silkily ambiguous. A helicopter hovers outside Winston's home window and O'Brien too hovers, cropping up as a paternal figure in Winston's dreams of a green place, landing him sickeningly on the bed of electric torture, lecturing him last of all towards the rats in Room 101. Burton's restrained, alas terminal, performance must surely rank as one of his best appearances on film. 'If you want a vision of the future, Winston, imagine a boot stamping on a human face for ever.' The celebrated line is delivered new minted.

Elsewhere the film shows crucial fidelity to the Orwellian text. From that bed-swamped room, the lovers lean out to watch Pam Gems's prole washerwoman singing as she pegs, the sole occasion for optimism. And not so incidentally her song is scored by Dominic Muldowney, who is responsible for the more often baleful music throughout. Roger Deakins achieved the bleak miracles of photography and, for once, a skilled editor working against time should get his credit: Tom Priestley, unsung ameliorator of many a lesser movie. For this is inexorably the most effective visualisation of what Orwell had in mind, down to the concluding zombie encounter of Winston and Julia, two bodies emptied of emotion, each having betrayed the other beyond redemption. When she leaves the sad café, there is surely no hopeful irony in Winston's 'I love you'. It is addressed to the TV image of Big Brother. What bothers me, rather, is the relevance of so much brain-washed squalor to *our* 1984. Certainly we should watch our language, arguably our most precious possession. But our present invites derision of our leaders and our future will probably find us still laughing as we vanish in atomic smoke.

Little enough merriment in the week's other offers. **The Highest Honour**, warningly subtitled 'A True Story', is an Australian-Japanese co-production, made two years ago, directed by Peter Maxwell in association with Seiji Maruyama, a big-budget whitewash — of a kind — of how the 'decent' Nipponese behaved when they occupied Singapore in World War II. Deprived of 35 minutes of its original running time, the jumpy affair now largely

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Burton offers 'one of his best appearances'

centres on a contraband friendship between an Aussie officer and a Japanese diplomat-interpreter. Written and acted in straightforward stereotype (stiff upper lip for a British major, jutting lower one for the odd nasty Asiatic, lots of lip from the men from Oz), it holds a modicum of interest through the different codes of honour which has the good Nippon lopping off the head of his Australian friend, Bushido-style. Gene Wilder directs, and over-acts in, **The Woman in Red**, a re-make of Yves Robert's *Un éléphant ça trompe énormément* nicely calculated to raise feminist hackles everywhere and only vestigially funny from where I sat. Stewart Raffill's **The Philadelphia Experiment**, anent a foolish radar-screen for a ship, time-warping a US sailor from 1943 to — yes — 1984, has ghastly special effects and nothing else to recommend it. □

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Don and lovers

Andrew Clements

IN MY PERSONAL pantheon of opera productions, the Glyndebourne **Don Giovanni** of the early 1980s, directed by Peter Hall and conducted by Bernard Haitink, ranks very high; as a musical and theatrical achievement it seemed hard to surpass. The EMI recording (SLS 1436653) followed close upon the 1982 stage performances, preserving the same cast with the single exception of Maria Ewing, who came in as Elvira. As in the theatre so on disc the opera pivots on the twin strengths of conductor and protagonist. Haitink's selfless, powerful account of the score is as starkly effective as ever, bringing a lean, perhaps slightly recessed sound from the London Philharmonic, and extracting every ounce of rhythmic energy and instrumental detail; it creates the overall impression of a finely focussed study in blacks and greys, an aural counterpart to the sombre tones of John Bury's Glyndebourne set.

Yet it would be wrong to regard this set as just the stage production transferred to record, a memento of a memorable experience. While the performances undoubtedly gain from the familiarity bred of stage rehearsals — the perfectly timed repartee between Giovanni and Leporello the most obvious example — they rival any others on record in purely musical terms. Haitink's lack of affectation, his musical honesty, is the ideal basis for an account of the opera that will stand up to repeated hearing, and Thomas Allen brings to the character of the Don an intensity which, even without his baleful, threatening stage manner, is totally convincing and unfailingly well sung. It's a portrayal which manages to suggest total amorality without sacrificing any charm or humour, and he is fluently partnered by the Leporello of Richard Van Allen. There are very few weak links in the remainder of the cast either. Perhaps Keith Lewis's Ottavio is a shade too neutral, though suave enough; it's possible also to imagine a more engaging Zerlina than that of Elisabeth Gale. But there can be no complaints about the other women: a dangerously passionate Anna from Carol Vaness and a touching, vulnerable Elvira from Maria Ewing. Altogether a version of the opera that sweeps its competitors on record firmly aside.

There's at least a tenuous Glyndebourne connection in the Philips **Magic Flute** (411 459-1, three records): the sleeve uses three of David Hockney's set designs for the Glyndebourne production. The recording, though, has a thoroughly European feel, with the Dresden orchestra and a cosmopolitan cast conducted by Colin Davis. The *Flute* is the last major Mozart opera to be recorded by Davis and he takes a broad, almost self-consciously mature view of it, never hurrying and perhaps suggesting a ritual more than a living, breathing music drama. I found it less interesting and satisfying than the now famous Haitink recording of a couple of years ago, but nevertheless it contains some fine singing and sympathetic conducting. There is an appropriately aristocratic pair of lovers in Peter Schreier's Tamino and Margaret Price's Pamina, noble of tone and bearing, and an unimpeachably profound Sarastro from Kurt Moll. Mikael Melbye is a conventional but genial enough Papageno; Luciana Serra is an uneven, perhaps over-careful Queen of the Night. More of a problem is the dialogue, which is not entrusted to the singers but handed over to actors: it's a solution fraught with difficulties, with changes of perspective and characterisation destroying the dramatic illusion too often and the whole thing not as well dovetailed as it might be. The net result lacks coherence, though its many musical beauties cannot be gainsaid. □

ROCK MUSIC

Phenomenal

Barney Hoskyns

THAT A GROUP should make the fourth-best selling British single of all time with their first release is remarkable. That they should follow it up with the eleventh-best selling British single of all time is freakish. Phenomenon is the only word for it. Liverpool's Frankie Goes To Hollywood, like Michael Jackson, have made people buy records again.

Why Frankie have sold so many records is due less to the group's being more talented than, say, Culture Club — it isn't — than to the eccentric figures who lie behind it, Trevor Horn and Paul Morley of ZTT Records. Two factors particularly seem to account for the mercurial success: a) the most shamelessly *outré* pop production since Phil Spector's 'River Deep, Mountain High' and b) the audaciously absurdist marketing which turned 'Relax' and 'Two Tribes' into multi-media street statements.

Few can doubt the role of producer Horn in making a bunch of punky scouse perverts sound like some vast electro-funk symphony orchestra. He is simply the most brilliant architect of sound this country has ever produced, as his work, from the lush synthetic reveries spun around MOR archangels Dollar to the global-disco field trip of Malcolm McLaren's *Duck Rock*, will attest.

As for publicity chief Morley, while he concedes that the Frankie phenomenon may not have politicised the pop consumer, he also argues that it did *involve* that otherwise passive creature in a form of communal cultural display. His mad advertising campaigns — all cryptic riddles and asinine maxims — have infuriated thousands but they have worked. They've worked because they are conceptually, and not just stylistically, different. Central to ZTT's *modus operandi* is a sense of humour for its own sake — 'to keep the brain alive'.

At present the pair are preparing the intensive autumn promotion of Frankie's double album *Welcome To The Pleasure Dome*, as well as planning the label's next phase with acts like the mysterious German group Propaganda, Parisian *chanteuse* Anne Pigalle (a sort of electronic Juliette Greco) and ex-Pigbag soulsters Instinct. It's an odd marriage, this partnership of the quiet, boffin-like Horn, a studio veteran of 15 years, and the mischievous Morley, one-time *enfant terrible* of pop journalism. 'When I heard the Dollar records in 1981,' says Morley, 'I realised Trevor was actually a comedian. Which is what *I* am.'

Horn, for his part, is anxious to allay fears that ZTT is some Spectoresque pop factory. His secret hope is that Frankie's success might persuade pop fans to investigate the label's more anomalous characters, such as Glassian systems composer Andrew Poppy or The Art of Noise, the anonymous studio team whom Horn employs on surreal cut-up jam sessions like 'Beatbox' and 'Close (To The Edit)', cult

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successes on American dance floors this summer.

> The idea of starting a label was to have a bit more control over what happens after you've put a lot of work into something, over the way it's marketed. If people don't understand a record and they sell it in the wrong way, it's disastrous.

Horn was relieved to find in Morley someone who 'understood' his records and who could 'be the soul' of the company while he stayed in the studio. He is content to leave Paul to his own devices as minister of disinformation but fully approves the strategy so far.

> There will always be groups around who are average and who sell records and make money, and when I listen to their records I can see that they're basically just doing business, like trading. I want us to kind of kick them up the ass and make them do better. This year with Frankie we've actually increased the overall sales of records anyway, because we've been getting more kids into record shops and getting them excited about something. And we've got to keep doing that. We've got to make the marketplace a more exciting place for everyone to be.

Who handles all the money, then? Does it sound like a Midlands soap opera to say that behind the dreams and principles of Horn and Morley is an intensely pragmatic businesswoman? The truth is, ZTT might well be up the proverbial spout but for Jill Sinclair, the company's third co-director. An ex-teacher and Horn's wife since 1980, this shrewd, unsentimental woman keeps the tabs on spending which could otherwise ruin them. What does *she* think of pop music?

> My interest in pop is very little. I can honestly say I hadn't bought an album before I joined the music business. What I am is the typical punter. In other words, if I like something, it's going to be a hit.

Jill Sinclair likes the next Frankie single. □

DANCE

Distillations

Stephanie Jordan

Royal Ballet
Sadler's Wells
Merce Cunningham
Joyce Theater, NYC, USA

ANDRÉ PROKOVSKY's first piece for SWRB, **Vocalise Opus 34**, is a sweet nothing to Rakhmaninov's 1912 score, here in its orchestral version. It is one of those brief *pas de deux* wherein the choreographer simply conforms to a standard notion of the romantic balletic get-together without extending himself in the genre. As frame for the piece, an unusual amount of time is devoted to supported circlings on one leg but, for the rest, Galina Samsova yields, droops and flaps about in pseudo-ecstasy while Alain Dubreuil runs gamely after her should she be given an opportunity to escape his clutches. I cannot believe that there was any burning artistic desire to create such a played out piece.

Following MacMillan's overwrought essay after Lorca, *Las Hermanas*, **Petrushka** was easily the most interesting feature of this programme. The Sadler's Wells stage cannot accommodate this ballet comfortably; it looks cramped and too rapidly paced for the folk drama to be effective. But David Bintley's interpretation of the puppet gives the work a rare tragi-pathos. Dancing like the physical shade of his companions, ever forlorn, quivering with impotent emotion, he proves himself again a great character dancer of his generation.

A visit to New York two weeks ago included a preview of pleasures to come in the May 1985 return to Sadler's Wells of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. At the Joyce Theater, the company performed a series of **Events**, a form that Cunningham has been exploring since 1964: Cunningham in essence, each 90-minute slab comprising sections from a variety of titled repertoire works. The selections differ for each *Event*, as do the costumes, which were, on the night that I saw the company, the simplest Balanchinian black-and-white practice clothes, with or without jazz shoes.

Today, Cunningham's work emphasises the age difference between the choreographer and his company. This is obvious not simply in technical terms but in the nature of the material and its potential for personality. Cunningham makes an artistic point out of the contrast. More than ever before, he himself represents the individual, the man of experience who can evoke many emotions, images or memories by minimal means. You sense the reality and humanity of the master.

In the *Event* that I saw, Cunningham made three appearances. The lights dimmed for his two solos, curious searching soliloquies which showed him pacing about restlessly, awkwardly, in disturbing fits and starts, or just stopping still, tracing wild squiggles and swirls with his arms. At the end, his hands became like giant moths fluttering at the mayhem around him.

That mayhem is Cunningham's super-machine, 15-strong company from which he demands endless fast, brainy steps, wide leggy work and complex weight shifts, phrases studded with impulses of a thrilling variety of density and origin. The performers have no choice but to attack much of this with cold vigour. Occasionally, they smile at the challenge of picking up cues or jumping back from stillness to add extra cogs to the mechanism.

Without seeing any backstage billing of the order of sections, I could spot episodes from two of Cunningham's pieces from the Sixties: *Scramble* and *Canfield* when the vocabulary was less concentrated, some would say less codified, as well as work from the Eighties: *Fielding Sixes* and *Tens with Shoes*. The sections are strikingly distinct, footwork dressed up in shoes for one, or a lively pole inserted to catch the gap between moving bodies, multibody sculpture (moments of rare adagio) characteristic of another. I heard that we even saw material from works still in rehearsal. Cunningham's powers of invention, theatrical pacing and rhythmic vitality are undiminished. □

Stephen Brook

Food and fado

NO ONE WOULD want to make excessive claims for Portuguese cooking. Its qualities derive from fresh local ingredients honestly prepared rather than from a repertoire of distinguished sauces or imaginative recipes. Still, at its best, Portuguese cooking is robust and rich and, even in London restaurants, inexpensive. Many recipes based on fish found off the Atlantic coast of Portugal can't easily be reproduced here, but some popular dishes are commonly found in London's Portuguese restaurants: grilled sardines; gambas, or giant prawns, often cooked in a searing chili sauce called *piripiri*; and *bacalhau*, the dried, salted cod ubiquitous in Portugal.

When you see them piled up in groceries, it's hard to imagine that these dessicated off-white slabs could be transformed into anything remotely edible but, after soaking for a couple of days, the cod is ready to be prepared in a bewildering variety of ways. The best I tasted was at O Fado, where it was cooked with potatoes, eggs and onions and topped with smoked ham.

Although game is common in winter in Portugal, the most frequently encountered meat is pork. At O Fado you can try the famous dish, *carne de porco a alentejana*, in which the meat, marinated in wine and bayleaves, is cooked with tiny clams, the saltiness of the shellfish undercutting the richness of the meat. And Caravela offers substantial portions of pork cooked with olives, cauliflower, potatoes, bayleaf and parsley – sweet in flavour and very filling. Sweets are a disappointment – *pudim* (crème caramel) is inexplicably popular – but it's always safe to begin a meal with soup, usually vegetable or bean. The best known Portuguese soup, *caldo verde*, a cabbage brew, is usually reliable, but only as good as the cook who prepares it.

Portuguese cooking, remember, is peasant fare not haute cuisine. Of the five Portuguese restaurants in London, two, O Lavagante and O Fogareiro (under the same ownership), aspire to greater things. Senhor Costa's restaurants blend Portuguese and French styles: good food, mostly fish, but not cheap and hardly authentic. The remaining three restaurants, for some reason, all flourish in the basements of Beauchamp Place. All three are excellent of their kind: friendly, intimate and good value. Ports is the newest and smartest, Caravela much the cheapest and O Fado probably the best and most authentic. £12 a head should buy you a good meal with wine at any of these restaurants. O Fado and Caravela also offer live *fado* music on certain nights of the week. Outside London the only place you'll find Portuguese cooking is in West Lothian.

A stronger case can be made for the merits of Portuguese wine. Best known for its magnificent fortified wines – port and madeira

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Cliff Harper

— and for its popular if undistinguished rosés, Portugal also produces a range of table wines that are among the finest bargains available in British wine shops. Excellent ten-year-old Dao can be bought for little more than £2 a bottle, and vintage wines of superb quality rarely cost more than £3. Heavy advertising has made the 'green' (meaning young, new) wine, *vinho verde*, increasingly popular. Refreshing and petillant, it's also low in alcohol and can be quaffed in generous quantities on summer days without ill effect. Unfortunately most of the bottled varieties imported into Britain have been sweetened and lack the delicious crispness of the bone-dry versions drunk in Portugal itself.

The red wines are mostly made by large companies or cooperatives, but by traditional methods, resulting in wines that are powerful and long-lived. Quality control is strictly enforced by the government and most wines carry a seal guaranteeing their quality. Drink the oldest you can find, or afford. Quality is one thing; taste is another. I happen to like the robust style of Portuguese reds, such as Dao or Colares, but if you're looking for the finesse and elegance of claret, look elsewhere. The excellent cheap blended wine called Serradayres is the lightest style I've encountered.

Keep an eye out for *garrafeiras*, which means a specially selected vintage, wines singled out by their makers for long ageing in cask and bottle. The best of them have a remarkable depth and length of flavour, and shouldn't cost more than £5.

Dao and *vinho verde* can be found in many chain shops; Oddbins and Bottoms Up carry a good selection of these and other Portuguese wines. The cheapest place to find them in London is Del Monico's of 64 Old Compton Street (they stock the delicious and inexpensive Romeira *garrafeira*), and some less common wines can be found at La Vigneronne of 105 Old Brompton Road. There you'll find the superb amber dessert wine from Setúbal.

The largest Portuguese delicatessen in London is the Lisboa in North Kensington. They have a good selection of the sweet winy sausages called *chouriço*, a few unexciting cheeses, salted cod and salted corners of the pig — belly, snout and trotter, to be precise — and a number of wines. (There's a Portuguese patisserie over the road, though I can't work up much enthusiasm for these egg-and-custard pastries.) You'll find similar products and wines at the exceptionally friendly World's End Delicatessen in Chelsea and a selection at Herby's in Edinburgh. □

Restaurants: *Caravela, 39 Beauchamp Place, London SW3; O Fado, 50 Beauchamp Place, London SW3; Ports, 11 Beauchamp Place, London SW3; O Fogareiro, 16 Hendon Lane, London N3; O Lavagante, 99 Fulham Road, London SW3; Madeira Mar, 3-6 West Main St., Armadale, W. Lothian.* Shops: *Lisboa Delicatessen, 54 Golborne Rd, London W10; World's End Delicatessen, 6 World's End Place, London SW10.*

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TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Swash

THE ESSENCE of television must be sitting in an armchair with a hot drink watching someone going down the rapids in a rubber dinghy: the only dunking you have to fear is that of your Rich Tea biscuit. Mine broke off and had to be rescued more than once in the course of my weekly fascination with **River Journeys** (BBC-2). One sequence, with the blond anthropologist Christina Dodwell riding the white waters of the murderous Wahgi River in New Guinea like Queen Boadicea in her chariot, found my biscuit poised between cup and lip for a full minute, until it gave up the battle just as the Dodwell dinghy turned turtle.

Most hypnotic so far has been the Congo, travelled by Michael Wood and his invisible team. Wood caught the Colonel Kokolo, an antique paddle steamer with 1,500 deck passengers crammed into a number of reeking barges complete with alleyways, markets, crime and a small police force. Conrad went up the Congo in 1892, at a time when it was in the black grip of Leopold of Belgium, and Wood gave us to understand that the darkness Conrad wrote about has yet to lift: a European, not an African darkness. At Stanleyville — 'a sad and decaying testament to colonialism and its aftermath' — the smell of foreign oppression was palpable.

Wood there met the archbishop, who told him: 'You fly through on a lightning trip and write a tremendous book. Don't imagine you are doing anything particularly profound.' His caution struck Wood, but I thought the old boy in his robes of office was too smug for wisdom. First impressions often illuminate where a lifetime has only muddied the water. 'Because of Conrad I approached the journey with caution,' said Wood. 'What I encountered throughout black Africa was open-heartedness and generosity.'

Germaine Greer must have been chosen for Brazil's River Sao Francisco (or the river for her) on account of her very lifelike Portuguese, a tool which allowed her typically to progress beyond mere visual response to a scene. It obviously appealed to the Australian in her to be following the route taken by slaves fleeing their masters into the interior. But the past was not so distant. On the vintage wood-burning paddle steamer, made in Birmingham, making its last trip upstream, she was not invited to sit at the Captain's table with the rest of the first-class guests, all men. Women were bad luck on board. So she dined alone, albeit with her unseen back-ups.

Once a thriving highway for trade, the Sao Francisco is now only a source of hydro-electricity, its ecology laid waste by a vast reservoir, 'a watery desert too shallow to have a colour of its own, too choppy to reflect the sky'. The upper storeys of the houses of several

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towns poked out of the water, their inhabitants reduced to living in new slums with pigs for a sewage system. We met an old lady who had been waiting years for compensation, knowing well that inflation and lawyers would absorb the money if it ever came. Her spry optimism was apparently the traditional way of coping with the unbearable.

Germaine Greer spoke and muttered freely, as one used to being understood by her listeners. Christina Dodwell, an anthropologist no doubt used to having her pidgin consistently misinterpreted, enunciated clearly and simply, for worldwide comprehension. No intellectual this, but a swashbuckling explorer who had accepted an invitation from a tribe she had studied to return one day for its 'Skin-cutting ceremony' — just as if it were for her niece's christening.

When we arrived at the village, whose ferocious warriors have a thing about missionaries and officials but not, for some reason, BBC film teams, I suddenly realised that Ms Dodwell was to be more than a spectator at the ceremony. Was it for our benefit, or her own? 'You don't have to do that,' I wanted to say, but the Gillette razor-blade so beloved of the circumcisors and infibulators who graced our screens last year was already being taken from its piece of startling white paper and applied to white skin. The ceremony is dedicated to the crocodile or, rather, to making human skin look as much like croc hide as possible, by cutting and raising it, using nipples for croc eyes etc. Ms Dodwell didn't take it quite to these lengths of similitude, but the blood flowed, eyes were upturned and smiles of triumph eventually produced. 'How much pain each person can bear determines their status,' she announced, as if this were a phenomenon unique to the people of Swagop. 'My mark was the highest honour. I had become part of New Guinea folklore.'

Her cuts had barely healed before hurry music was lashing the forthcoming rapids to a corkscrewing Cresta of white lather. The sequence which followed was remarkable not least for the way the roughest piece of water in the world proceeded to get rougher and rougher, as if it had only the film's best interests at heart. 'If a boat is going to be eaten it's likely to happen here,' said Christina without fear of contradiction. When a dinghy overturns like a matchbox, this is 'some embarrassment to Skip, who has only turned over three other boats in his career'.

Foot rot, diarrhoea, exhaustion and the threat of cannibals oblige these sportspeople to take to the choppers, with my blessing. Rescuing my biscuit from a watery grave, I had to agree with Dodwell that 'to have continued would have been suicidal'.

By contrast, the most recent voyage of the series, this time down the Nile, seemed a tamely historical affair, though not without humour, as when Brian Thompson, sitting in his tent on the banks of the longest river in the world, is told by a local magician that he will shortly be taking a journey by boat.

Blue-eyed and masterful, Thompson was very much the colonial Englishman abroad, commenting unfavourably on the postal service and asking the postmaster's son what he wanted to be when he grew up. □

Naseem Khan

Women's act

A frightful thing happened to poor old Horace Cole. There he was, minding his own business, in his rather beastly semi, laying down the law — as chaps do — to his little wife, when the doorbell rang. And who should drop in, but all his female relatives. And, going by the baggage, they had come to stay.

That, say the authors sweetly in this bit of Edwardian agitprop, could be the logical conclusion to men's refusal to give women the vote, on the grounds that all women were dependents of men. The women of England return, in Cicely Hamilton and Chris St John's little fantasy, to be kept women. The economy totters, the home base rocks and men get converted to the principle of universal suffrage. And that's, the authors of this 1909 sketch fantasise, How the Vote Was Won.

The audience at the rehearsed reading, members of Women in Entertainment, laughed and clapped appreciatively. After all, it's not every day you come face to face with an ancestor. *How the Vote Was Won* and two other little plays performed last weekend for the WiE's annual conference go back more than 70 years, when they formed part of the repertoire of the sturdy Actresses' Franchise League.

On the face of it — or so popular opinion has it — women have a pretty good time in theatre. Actresses, designers, publicists — you can see them up there at the top, names in lights. Maybe Noël Coward got it wrong when he counselled Mrs Worthington not to put her daughter on the stage? Perhaps the young Worthington would have been in her element. Maybe — if she'd been prepared to settle into a distinctly circumscribed role. The 'female' type service roles are accessible enough, though the larger number of actresses than actors out of work should make her think again. And if she wanted to break into the male field of directing in particular, then Mr Coward has a point.

Earlier this year the Standing Conference of Women Directors and Administrators released the results of a survey ('Chilling figures' — *Guardian*) that covered the practice over a year at 52 out of 54 reps, 24 out of 26 fringe theatres and 41 out of 61 alternative and community theatres. What it was looking for was the ceiling on women, and they found it. Out of 117 artistic directors, for instance, 14 were women; out of 65 resident associate directors, 11 were women. Out of 1,024 plays performed, 108.5 (.5?) were by women. Only among administrators did the tally seem anything like evenly matched, with 66 men to 51 women. But then a closer look reveals that women administrators predominate in the poorer and more powerless fringe. 'It must become clear to you,' said Sue Dunderdale, one of the progenitors of the survey, 'that the more money and more prestige a theatre has, the less women will be employed in decision-making positions, and the less women will be on the board.'

Faced with such an imbalance, what can women do? Is a mass campaign in order? In fact, Women in Entertainment have already made one big gesture, and a fine and seminal one it was. It lasted a month — May in 1982 — and in that time women's work was everywhere. Co-ordinated nationally by the organisation (a fast-moving Paula Brown and a corps of volunteers), it included plays, music, ceildhs, brass bands, poetry readings, acrobatics, as far across the country, in one hectic band of energy, as WiE could contrive. But what follow-up has it had, its critics will ask. Are women in entertainment any better off? Wasn't it a sheer act of tokenism?

Paula, naturally, disagrees and cites the numerous intangible spin-offs: the growth in confidence, the new contacts. Certainly it is noticeable that the formation in 1979 of Women in Entertainment was part of a development that included, in 1980, the Women's Playhouse Trust and the Standing Conference of Women Theatre Directors and Administrators and, in 1983, the London Screenwriters Workshop and Women's Employment Working Party of the Directors' Guild. Whatever the seed, the crop has increased and diversified.

The festival Women Live was a broad, all-inclusive showcase. That gave it its strength as a one-off gesture; but arguably the time for such gestures is past. Existence is no longer something to be proved. Function, rather, is what is debated at present.

'Do we simply want a fair share of the action or do we want to reshape it entirely?' one woman at the WiE conference cried. Is the aim to function as cryptomen in an authoritarian structure? Or should the somewhat undefined 'female qualities' be brought to bear to transform those structures? What are those female qualities?

They are all questions that simmered under the surface of the debate last Sunday which, on the whole, confined itself stringently to practical ends. Reports came back on a successful series of workshops that WiE had set up. A resource centre was discussed at length, and approved in principle, and so was a WiE Performance Front along the lines of the Actresses' Suffrage League. While the WiE works on these specific areas, more groups are active in the field. The Standing Conference of Women Directors (*et al*) have a conference with Ann Jellicoe, Sue Todd and others at London's Riverside on October 21 on 'The Woman's Voice in the Working Process of Theatre' (open to nonmembers). The Women's Playwrighting Workshop shows the lively-sounding results of work with Penny Casdagli at the Unicorn, October 19-21. The Directors' Guild is due to receive results of its own enquiry.

'In trying to establish a broad front and please as many as possible, we had obliterated ourselves with blandness,' said Sue Dunderdale, looking back. The various initiatives and the debate around them can no longer be accused of blandness. What is needed, though, is careful monitoring to make sure that the energy of the various parts is as productive overall as it should be. Perhaps it is time for an Equal Opportunities officer to be appointed, for a start, to Equity. □

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Weekend competition

No 2843 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Has it ever struck you that 'Mrs Thatcher' has the same rhythm as 'Hiawatha'? Could we please have a Song of Mrs Thatcher after Longfellow — max. 10 lines by Wednesday 24 October?

No 2840 **Set by Snubbin**

Re-writes of 'My Favourite Things' for 1984.

Report **By Glancing Tom**

All right, ladies and gents, imagine the darkened stage of a nightclub. You're sitting out there pushing the crème round a murky puddle of caramel when a smoky spotlight strikes the piano revealing yours truly in a white DJ, his fingers suspended like goshawks over the ivories. A swooping glissando; a pause; a chord; I begin:

Your entries came (of course you wouldn't miss one)
And some were good, but some were just like *this* one.
Oh, how my poor eyes sting!
You foolish things —
You'd got the wrong song.

Now *would* we have asked you to bugger up such a lovely tune as 'These Foolish Things'? To those of you that had your specs on, and know Julie Andrews from Nat King Cole, congratulations and a tenner to everyone printed.

Maggy's Song

Riding down miners with lots of police horses,
Sending young unemployed boys in the forces,
Hearing those privatised 'phones sweetly ring,
These are a few of my favourite things...

Belgrano secrets not told to the House yet,
Kicking the balls of those creeps in my Cabinet,
Hearing that chorus of sycophants sing
Medlies of some of my favourite things...

Cruise and Trident,
Being strident,
While the *Sun* shines on,
These are a few of my favourite things
You'll remember when I...am gone.

SCRYFA TOLCARNE

Chauvinist clichés and whirlwind romances,
Cynical eyebrows and smouldering glances,
Ecstatic passions and tremulous swoons,
Cram all the pages of my Mills & Boons.

Bronzed rippling shoulders and masterful poses,
Arrogant drawling and aquiline noses,
Lips crushed to hers with an ardour that stings,
These are a few of my favourite things.

When the kids whinge. When he's home late,
And he's always pissed,
I go to the Lib'ry for ten Mills & Boons,
To dream of the things I've missed.

DEBORAH LYE

Stories that pour past your Cabinet plumber,
Tories and chums up a gum tree with Gummer,
Sweat on the ministers' hands that She wrings —
These are a few of My Favourite Things.

Wets getting fretful, and with Prior warning,
Reddening skies suggest 'fine in the morning',
She's still stuck plucking her sycophants' strings —
These are a few of My Favourite Things.

Jinx on Jenkin, Howe about it,
Any blue buffoon —
They're all of them really My Favourite Things,
Because they'll be gone, and sooooooooooooooon!

WILL BELLENGER

Socialists with houses in both town and country,
Thirty-year rulings, a bloody affrontery!
Bathing or screwing — the telephone rings.
These are a few of my favourite things.

Men in green wellies and women in 'huskies'
Braying, 'Those gels down at Greenham are Ruskies!'
Rich Hampstead trendies who claim they're left-wing
And read the *New Statesman* to prove just that thing.

When the cuts bite,
When the Right stings
At the public purse,
I simply remember my favourite things
And then — bugger me — it seems worse.

DIANA EDEN

Orange-brown kippers and purple dyed yoghurts,
Lurid green string beans and glutamate 'snack-pots',
E-muls-ifiers, carcinogens too,
These are a few of my favourite foods.

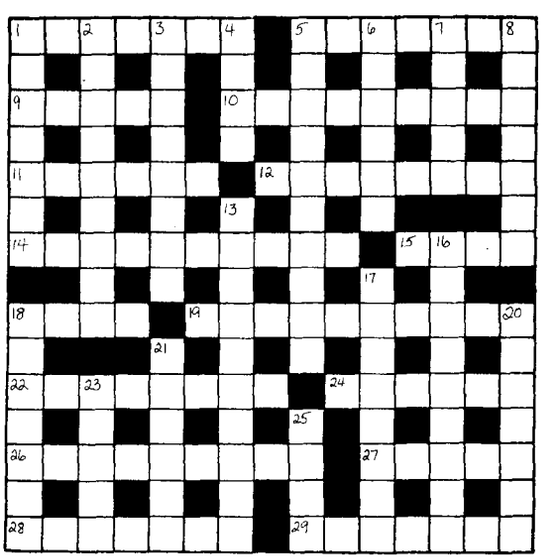
Pretty containers and fanciful wrappings,
Hundreds of products to wrap babies' crap in,
Whiskas and Hedex and Flora for men,
These are a few of my favourites, then

When the door slams,
When my man's gone,
When I've got PMT,
I go to the shops for my favourite sops
And see what's on the TV.

JENNY DAVIES

Weekend Crossword 1456

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1456, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 23 October.



Name _____

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ACROSS

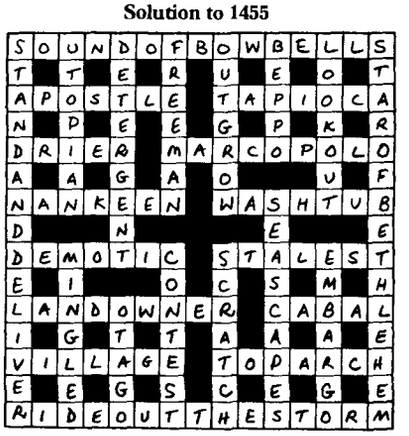
1. A number take cover when it is getting light (7)
5. Spying for the East in an eastern capital (7)
9. Organisation which puts one in the lead in court (5)
10. Voting system set out systematically so that it is fit to read (9)
11. Part of barrel made from tree family (6)
12. Courses for beginners (8)
14. The French port with room for a market (10)
15. Literary man who is the opposite of dull (4)
18. Without me the animal would be all right (4)
19. Place where the chief commodity is found at the back of the store (10)
22. Hackneyed sayings have a cutting edge (8)
24. If he goes back he's done wrong (6)
26. The company performed without one member in close association (9)
27. Remove from the water as everyone looks worried (5)
28. Wrongly retains what is more unpleasant (7)
29. Cricketers in the deep both here and abroad (7)

DOWN

1. Quantity which makes a girl unusually flush (7)
2. It produces a distinguished paper to study after a drink (9)
3. Weakened and half got up about two (8)
4. Look astonished as one turns the page (4)
5. Close to the target but the aim is not lethal? (5,5)
6. It is kept intact when conservationists enter the country (6)
7. Moisten but reduced in me after one (5)
8. Oiled as in strong desire (7)
13. Whereas rat turns into bird (10)
16. A very quiet final period for a hanger-on (9)
17. And the rest are fed up about Crete being spoilt (8)
18. Indian makes a complaint about this in Latin (7)
20. Times when diners lose their heads (7)
21. Demand fresh air for a soldier (6)
23. Of Bacchus and of Circe born (5)
25. Poems held in good esteem (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1455



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AMIABLE, INTELLIGENT man, 31, armchair Marxist, likes books, films, pubs and idle gossip, seeks articulate, humorous woman for company, friendship, even love. Bristol area. Box 9384.

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ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT divorcée (40s), slim, sympathetic, sensual, solvent, seeks unattached, lively man, similar age and attributes, to share cultural pursuits and loving relationship. London area. Box 9379.

BISEXUAL MARRIED academic (48), working Germany, recorder player, theatre, walking, talking, seeks permanent young friend (over 21), London, Cambridge, Norwich, for frequent visits to England. Box 9446.

BRIGHTON BOY, recently jilted and hence very lonely, would like to hear from any local girls who are into music, politics, film or just talking. Box 9442.

COMPANY DIRECTOR, 47, well travelled, unattached, no ties, seeks attractive, slim lady, over 21, in similar circs. Varied interests. Fond of sun and fast cars. Box 9411.

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"7/DAY" 24 hrs. ACM-Address Unlimited Mail. £1 mth, discounts 3 mths £2.50, 6 mths £4.50, 1 yr £8.25. M. Abrahams, 15 Clifton Gardens, London N15. 01-800 0373.

ENTERPRISING, VIRILE, humorous, intelligent male, 38, seeks vivacious female counterpart to share/enjoy adventures, relationship etc. Interests: theatre, arts, dining, countryside, wholefood, life. Photo appreciated. Midlands/London/SW. Box 9394.

FEMALE TEACHER seeks close friendship with graduate male (35-45) to share domestic/fun aspects of life. Sense of humour and financial independence and honesty preferred (London). Box 9425.

FIFTY-ONE year old widow of managing director, 5'5", slim, interested philosophy, parapsychology, music, seeks tall, cultured, sensitive, 50-55, male, preferably right wing/Pisces/Scorpio. Photo please. Box 9449.

FRIENDS AROUND the world. Free information. Concordia-International Penpals Club, Box 185, Snowdon, Montreal H3X3T4, Canada.

GAY MAN, graduate, socialist, 26, disabled, lives in London, interested in politics, history and cinema, wishes to meet sensitive man (over 21), perhaps slightly lonely. Photograph appreciated. Box 9408.

GRADUATE WOMAN artist, 36, salaried, childfree, Kent. Wide cultural interests, also countryside, animals, wholefoods, fitness. Seeks sharing relationship with professional, practical, sociable, smokefree man. Box 9443.

IS THERE a highly intelligent, attractive, warm man (45-50) with whom I could walk, talk, share cultural life in London? (non-smoker, unattached). Box 9448.

JEAN E. (CARDIFF) — please recontact John E. (Swansea — adv. 17 August) through this Box or telephone. Discretion assured. Box 9441.

JUNK THE Ginseng, stop the squash, stuff the lentils; drift into decadence with literary socialist female (41), untamed, unexpurgated, available, near you, now! Box 9410.

LADY IN HER thirties, CND and Labour Party orientated, seeks gentleman in Oxford area, for friend, to share good and bad times. Box 9428.

LIVELY, ATTRACTIVE, equable, independent female, interests: psychology, theatre, films, travel, seeks graduate male, 48-58, similar interests/attributes for companionship, Cambridge/London area. Box 9431.

LONDON VEGETARIAN woman, 45, humanist outlook, interests include country walking, cinema, books, jazz, would like to meet down to earth, leftish man for friendship. Box 9439.

M & F JEWISH FRIENDSHIP/Marriage Agency has many attractive, intelligent young ladies seeking genuine introductions. Write Box 9204 ot tel. 01-340 5616.

MALE ACADEMIC, enlightened, and mature, sensitive and solvent, 45, good humoured, divorced, wide interests: seeks female of similar make up, graduate preferred, for lasting relationship. Box 9367.

MALE (BLACK), 30, accountant, socialist, attractive, 5ft 9ins tall, recently lost fiancee through car crash, seeks female under 38, for meaningful relationship. London/anywhere. Reply promised. Box 9432.

MALE, 36, interested in Shivambu Kalpa (urine therapy) seeks female with same interest. Reading, Berks. Box 9450.

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE. Widow, 40s, professional, awaits a reply from the articulate, intelligent male who is destined to be made incredibly happy. Box 9430.

ONE MAN band/juggler/poet/sane, 37, own house Whitby, seeks Ms with similar interests!? Reply for no strings weekend break on Yorkshire coast. Box 9391.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, early-retired, interested arts, travel, divorced, grown-up family, seeks affectionate male companion, 50s-60s, London. Box 9426.

QUIET, TIDY, self sufficient, single male 30, seeks compatible lady, 25-35, preferably intelligent but not intellectual, tolerant and good-humoured, to share life, home etc. Box 9405.

MAN, 41, divorced, currently disillusioned with life generally, seeks caring, honest female. London/surrounding area. Box 9422.

REALISTIC, ROMANTIC woman, 36, Marxist values, sneaky bourgeois tastes, thoughtful pleasure-lover, seeks engaged, emotionally intelligent, attractive man for pursuit of truths and trivia. Box 9423.

SENSITIVE, CONSIDERATE North London man, early fifties, divorced, broad interests but socially unskilled, seeks female company. Box 9389.

SENSITIVE, PROFESSIONAL man, mid-forties, tall, divorced, quietish, seeks lively woman, possibly with children, for caring relationship. Warwickshire/Midlands/wherever. Box 9433.

SOCIALIST MALE graduate, 32, sensitive and sincere, with sense of humour, likes friends, countryside, music, food, wine and travel, seeks non-smoking female for caring relationship, South Yorks area. Box 9416.

SOPHISTICATED GIRL (38!) wishes to meet rich gentleman; she too has attributes — attractive, good listener and conversationalist, adores champagne but can also cook. Box 9398.

TALL, LONELY, non party political gentleman, 36, wishes to meet lady interested in good music, countryside, perhaps bird-spotting. Dorset. Box 9409.

THIS MIDDLE-AGED Pygmalion is naturally seeking liaison with lady in his own image — literate, educated, articulate. Box 9358.

UNATTACHED? DISCERNING, attractive individuals are waiting to meet you. Hedi Fisher Bureau (Est. 1970), 45-46 Chalk Farm Road, NW1. 01-267 6066.

VERY MYOPIC male, Ametropic, 55, Anglophile, American, literate, lettered, travelled, unencumbered, seeks female with similar opthalmological malady for commiseration, mutuality, association, direction etc., Box 9372.

VERY WELL-MEANING 'Guardian'/'New Society' reader, early 30s, male, tall, into cycling, humour, walking, cinema, theatre; would like to meet similar female — West Yorkshire/York. Box 9429.

WEST DEVON. Vivacious and pretty professional lady seeks affectionate, intelligent male friend in forties, interests include theatre, cinema, walking, reading, travel, wine and food. Box 9447.

WEST YORKS area. Single socialist male, 32, seeks friendship of interesting female. Box 9440.

WEST YORKS. Doctor, 35, female, divorced, no children, traveller, amateur classical musician: attractive, witty, affectionate; seeks intelligent man, 30-45, for short or long term friendship etc. Box 9399.

WOMAN, THOUGHTFUL, enterprising, warm, Marxist, many interest, 41, tries to be non-sexist, non-racist, would like to meet more men friends, 30-50. Box 9406.

WRITER RESEARCHING book on 'Heartsearchers' (herself happily attached), seeks sympathetic discussions of individuals/groups experiences. London/Surrey area. All letters answered. Box 9314.

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Prospectus from: **David Rundle, Director, British Institute, Lungarno Guicciardini 9, Florence, Italy. Tel. 010-39 55 284 031.**

BOOKS

BEVERLY SISSONS, a prison teacher's book 'An Inside Job' £3.50 post free, from Freshfields, Publishers, Aboyne, Aberdeenshire.

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion St, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822.

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NINE MEN'S MORRIS. Details are available from the Society's founder. T.A. Layton, 3 Sussex Road, Hove, BN3 2WD.

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(TRAFIC is supported by the GLC.)

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Details from: **Jean Polk, MCOD, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR.**
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MEETINGS

ESOTERIC INSIGHTS for new age given in Alice Bailey writings — psychology, astrology, healing, meditation. Introductory W/end 26/28 Oct. in lovely Wye Valley at Medhope, Tintern (02918 253), nr Severn Bridge, Gwent.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 14 Oct. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'Reincarnation & Karma'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

THE SOCIALIST SOCIETY

SOCIALISM IN LONDON

a series of public meetings

1. *Beyond our Ken?*
   Thurs. 11 Oct.
   Hilda Keane & Margaret Hodge
2. *Planning the Local Economy*
   Wed. 24 Oct.
   Mike Best, Madhu Verma & John Tilley
3. *Working for Women*
   Wed. 14 Nov.
   Mandy Snell & Sarah Roelofs
4. *State of the Art*
   Wed. 5 Dec.
   Stanley Mitchell, X Moore

The films at work video redskins/ Tony Banks. Other meetings on Racism, LAs as Employers, Housing, Education & Police.
All meetings at County Hall 7.30pm

MAPAM PRESENTS
Yoel Darom
'Communes in Israel & the World' — a comparison
Sun. 14 Oct. 8.p.m.
37 Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6.

German Historical Institute, London
Tuesday 16 Oct, 5 p.m.
Prof. Dr Dietmar Rothermund (Heidelberg)
India in the Great Depression 1929-1939
17 Bloomsbury Square London WC1A 2LP
01-404 5486
Tea from 4.30 p.m.
Seminar starts 5 p.m.

LISTINGS

FRI 12 OCT

HACKNEY 'Beyond the Blocs' Public meeting 8pm Stoke Newington Town Hall, Stoke Newington Church St, N16. Spkrs. E. P. Thompson and from Poland, Finland, Turkey to discuss breaking the Cold War death-grip. **Orgs. END & Hackney CND.**

BRIXTON Benefit for Nicaragua 8-12pm Brixton Art Gallery, 19-21 Atlantic Rd, SW9. Music from Patricia Romeo, Poetry from Charlotte Cornwell. **Org. Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 20-21 Compton Terr, N1. 01-226 6747.**

CAMDEN Benefit for the Miners 7.30pm Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1. The Joeys, Ivor Cutler & Support Band. Tickets £3/£2 UB40 from Shaw Theatre, Euston Rd, NW1.

SAT 13 OCT

BOSWELLS, SCOTLAND 'Farming and the Nuclear Winter' one day conf. 10am-5pm Dryburgh Abbey Hotel, Newtown St. (2 mls. from A68). Spkrs incl. Prof. A. Manning, Dept of Zoology, Edinburgh Uni., Dr. P. Kelly, Climate Research Unit, UEA. Fee £15 incls. coffee, lunch, tea. Cheques payable to: 'Scottish Winter Conference' to 'Eildonfoot', Claymyres La, Newstead, Melrose TD6 9RW.

GLASGOW W. Scotland Friends of Palestine folk night/social 8pm Star Club, Carlton Pl. Adm. £1.50/75 UB40. **Org. WOSFOP 38 Campsie Dr., Bearsden. 041 442 8804.**

SHEFFIELD 'A Workers' Plan for Energy' working meeting for all who wish to assist the miners' struggle. Adm. £1.50/75p UB40 Graves Cinema, Sheffield Uni. SU. **Org. Soc. Soc, SERA,. BSSRS, CSE. Details: Socialist Society 01-734 8501.**

LONDON Amnesty International exhibition of how basic freedoms are denied around the world begins at County Hall, SE1. Until 19 Oct. Adm. Free.

LONDON Bazaar for London Friends of Palestine 12.30-5.30pm Africa Centre, Covent Garden. Palestinian Handicrafts, Exhbition Sale.

SUN 14 OCT

LONDON 'Days of Hope' forum on local democracy and anti-rate-capping tactics for Labour Party & TU members. 10am-5pm County Hall, SE1. Spkrs incl Alistair Macrae (NUPE), Ruth Gee (ILEA), Mike Ward, GLC. Creche. **Details: LCC 01-590 5808.**

MON 15 OCT

LONDON 'Alternative medicine — putting theory into practice' Spkr. Jeannette Mitchell (GLC) first of 'Beneath the white coat', a fortnightly series of seminars on science & politics sponsored by BSSRS. 6.30pm Adam's Arms, 4 Conway St, W1.

LONDON 'How to Combat Antisemitism & Racism in Britain Today' Panel discn. with Marion Janner, Michael May, David Rosenberg, Danny Silverstone. 7.15pm Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1. **Org. Jewish Cultural and Anti-Racist Project. 01-587 1506.**

BARKING Mass Picket in support of NUPE Barking Hospital Strike. 6.30am all day. Bring friends, workmates, banners. Nearest tube stn. UPNEY (District line).

TUES 16 OCT

NOTTINGHAM 'Royal Meeting for Gays' (Men) 8pm Royal Concert Hall. Discn. on a Lesbian & Gay Community Centre, City Funding for Gay Helplines. **Details: Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS 0602 780124 (eves).**

LONDON Support the Miners Public Meeting 7.30pm The Hall, 42 Braganza St, SE17. Spkrs. Peter Heathfield, Betty Heathfield, Harriet Harman & spkrs. from CND & S. African Congress of TUs.

THURS 19 OCT

CAMDEN Public Meeting on Miners' Strike, 7.30pm Camden Town Hall, Judd St, WC1. Spkrs. Denis Skinner, MP, Frank Dobson, MP, Margaret Holmes, Deal Women's Support Grp., NUM spkrs. **Details: Reg, Camden Miners' Support Grp., 102 Pancras Way, NW1. 01-485 6352.**

SAT 20 OCT

LONDON 'Central America: Options for Peace & Economic Development'. One day conf. London Sch. of Economics, Houghton St, WC2. **Details: War on Want, 467 Caledonian Rd, N7 9BE 01-609 0211.**

LEEDS 'Labour Housing Campaigning'. Day conf. by Labour Housing Grp. 10.30am-5pm Leeds Civic Hall. Creche, Lunch, Snacks. Registration £2/£1 UB40. **Details and registration: John Battle, 4 Norwood Grove, Leeds LS6 1DT.**

FORTHCOMING

22 OCT LONDON 'Women in Africa' Seminar Series. Today: 'Women workers on tobacco estates in Malawi' Spkr. Megan Vaughan African Studies Centre, Cambridge Uni. 5pm-6.15pm London Extra Mural Centre, 32 Tavistock Sq, WC1. Creche. Free adm. **Details: Debbie Gaitskell 01-444 9024.**

23 OCT LONDON 'Confronting Racism — a role for Jews' 7.30pm Christchurch Church Hall, Willesden La, NW6. Spkrs. Cllr. Merle Amory, Shalon Chrikar. **Org. JCARP 01-587 1506.**

24 OCT LONDON Lobby of MPs by Peoples Asbestos Action Campaign. **Details: PAAC 01-253 3627.**

25 OCT DUDLEY 'Europe's Road to Peace' Marxism Today discn. with Jon Bloomfield. 7.30pm Dudley Library, St. James Road. **Details: 0384 238216.**

26 OCT SHEFFIELD 'Housing for the Elderly' Study day org. by British Assoc. for service to the Elderly. Tapton Hall of Residence, Uni. of Sheffield. **Details: Mrs. Cynthia Wyld, Director BASE, 3 Keele Farmouse, Keele, Staffs. 0782 627280.**

26 OCT LONDON 'The Mass Psychology of Thatcherism' 7.30pm Freemason's Arms, Long Acre, WC1. Spkrs. incl. Jocelyn Chaplin and membs. of W. London Socialist Soc. **Details: Socialist Society 01-734 8501.**

27 OCT UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, Guildford. Amnesty Campaign against Torture meeting 9.45am-1pm. Spkrs. incl. Janet Johnstone, Director, British Amnesty, Joji Carino, victim of torture, Frances Crook, Organiser of British Amnesty's Campaign against Torture. **Details: Mr. H. Hillman, 0483 571281.**

27 OCT NORWICH 'Christians in Politics' Day Conf. Park Lane Methodist Church Community Centre. Spkrs. Chris Smith MP, Peter Dawe, GLC. Adm. £2. **Details: Harry Watson 0603 419562.**

27 OCT BRISTOL 'Women count — count women's work' — organising across the divide of race, nation, poverty. 2-6pm St. Werburghs Church, Mina Road, St. Werburghs. Creche, signer, translators, wheelchair access. Spkrs incl. Wilmette Brown, Doreen Hoskin, Jasbir Kaur, Nina Lopez-Jones. Food, evening social. **Details: 0272 422116, 79 Richmond Rd, Montpelier, Bristol 6.**

27 OCT BARROW Work for Peace — Stop Trident! CND National Demo. Assemble Trident Dock 1pm. Rally 3.30pm. Details: CND 11 Goodwin St, London, N4 3HQ.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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BY THREE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITIES ON THE SUBJECT:
PROF. PAUL EHRLICH (USA) • DR. RICHARD TURCO (USA) • DR. ANNE EHRLICH (USA)

5-15 NOVEMBER · 1984

5 Nov.	**LONDON**
All day	Press, T.V., radio interviews.
6 Nov.	**SHEFFIELD**
1.30 pm	Local Authority Briefing.
7.30 pm	Public Meeting, Octagon Centre, Sheffield University Campus, Western Bank.
	LEEDS
Afternoon	University Seminar
7.30 pm	Public Meeting, Main Hall, Kitson College of Technology, Cookridge Street.
7 Nov.	**NEWCASTLE**
1.30 pm	Local Authority Briefing.
7.30 pm	Public Meeting, New Tyne Theatre, Westgate Road.
	EDINBURGH
1.30 pm	Seminar/lecture, Edinburgh University.
7.30 pm	Public meeting, Music Hall, Assembly Rooms, George Street.
8 Nov.	**GLASGOW**
All day	*Civil Defence/Emergency Planning Conference.*
7.30 pm	Public Meeting, Henry Wood Centre, Berkeley Street.
9 Nov.	**BIRMINGHAM**
1.30 pm	Local Authority Briefing.
Afternoon	Seminar/lecture, Birmingham University.
7.30 pm	Public Meeting, Great Hall, Aston University.
10 Nov.	**OXFORD**
All day	SANA Symposium on 'The Global Effects of Nuclear War'.
12 Nov.	**CAMBRIDGE**
Afternoon	Seminar/lecture, Cambridge University.
	NORWICH
Afternoon	Seminar/lecture, University of East Anglia.
7.30 pm	Public Meeting, Blackfriars Hall, St. Andrews Street.
13 Nov.	**BRISTOL**
1.30 pm	Local Authority Briefing.
Afternoon	Seminar/lecture, Bristol University.
7.30 pm	*Public Meeting, Watershed, Bristol Exhibition Centre.*
14 Nov.	**LONDON**
Morning	Consultations, GLC.
Afternoon	Seminar/lecture, University of London, Imperial College.
15 Nov.	**LONDON**
Morning	Briefing for MPs, House of Commons.
1.30 pm	Local Authority Briefing.
7.30 pm	Public Meeting, Lecture Hall, Central Hall, Westminster.

For further information
about the Speakers, the Nuclear Winter, the University Seminars and the Scientific Symposium or about SANA, contact Rebecca Miles, SANA, London Production Centre, Broomhill Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 4JQ

For further information
about the Local Authority Briefings, Public Meetings or Nuclear Free Zone Authorities contact Jim Coleman, Nuclear Free Zone Officer, Central Policy Unit, Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Sheffield S1 2HH

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